AL-SIRAJ THE LANTERN

On The Path To Allah Almighty

by

Shaikh Husain ibn Ali ibn Sadiq al-Bahrani

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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Al-Siraj The Lantern on the Path To Allah Almighty

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point

A guide for spiritual wayfarers on ethics and ways to strengthen one's faith, with the goal .(to reach Allah (swt

The Book and the Author

In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Peace and blessings be upon the best of Allah's creation, Muhammad ('s), and upon his Purified Progeny ('a), the ones through whom Allah Almighty perfected the code of ethics, and the curse be upon their foes and those who denied their virtues from the beginning of .life and for eternity

The book before you is regarded as one of the best that deal with applied ethics if you observe the following: its brevity and concentration. The best is what is the least said, while meaning the most, be it with regard to what is articulated or written. It is well known that too much talk about one topic, though useful, may be too much of a distraction to one seeking to benefit there from. This is why we notice how the Qur'an, which brings about .the happiness of the beings if they follow it, is no larger than ordinary books nowadays

The Qur’an is inclusive, moderate and does not concentrate on one particular field at the expense of another. Some people look upon ethics from the ritualistic angle, so they move about from one ritual to another, finishing the entire

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...recitation time and over again, commemorating one Arba`in (۱) after another

It is as though the worshipper tries to ascend to the angelic world in one night and through one ritual, forgetting that the path is what is advocated by the Qur'an: through one's straightforwardness, struggle and serious effort to implement the Shari`ah to the letter, starting from individual matters, that is, acting upon what is obligatory and abandoning what is prohibitive, passing by what is highly commendable and what is held as contemptible, ending with the social issues, even if the latter means fighting the enemies of Allah Almighty on the field. We have pointed out in this book to portraits of .such inclusion, something which has set this work apart from others

Its realism: We see how the author inclines to display ethics as applied portraits to which one has to adhere while practicing them, rather than a collection of complicated ideas very close to being runes and riddles, as if their owner wants to prove through them his scholarly distinction and superiority over his peers. You may read the book once or twice without finding in it any one practical point applied on life's field, one whereby a human .alters his conduct, instead of being a purely scholarly luxury

:(Book's Adherence to the Way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a

The author hardly leaves one field without documenting it with a terse tradition transmitted from the guides of mankind, thus reflecting the depth of the author's adherence to the necessity of comparing any major or minor movement seeking

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.For the meaning of Italicized Arabic terms, please refer to the Glossary. __ Tr -۱

nearness to Allah Almighty with what is cited from them, peace be upon them. This is quite plentiful as recorded in the collections of citations from them through various .narrations

We think that anyone who seeks a path to Allah Almighty which avoids the system adopted by Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) is doomed to either fall into the pitfalls of Satan or into self-deception. Either one of these suffices to lead to eternal perdition; so, ?!what if both elements of perdition are present simultaneously

Should those who go to visit the sultan enter through any door other than the one which he ordered them to knock at? What is intended is not merely to enter the house-although entry is sought-arbitrarily, but it has to be done through the doors we are required to knock at. One who visits you by climbing your house's rooftop is a burglar, even if he .seeks to reach you and to put himself at your service

Allah has enabled the author to succeed, sweetening his speech, thus making it appreciated by everyone who reads his book and who has been granted a good taste in this field. Whatever comes out of the heart enters into the heart. Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, may Allah sanctify him, has said the following about him in his work titled A`yan al-Shi`a: 'Shaikh Husain ibn Ali ibn Sadiq al-Bahrani is a virtuous scholar of ethics from among the later generations of the faqihs of Najaf and its scholars of hadith, biography and

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.cognition

We have come across a dissertation by him dealing with ethics,' a reference to this book. Then the author goes on to say, 'It is a good dissertation. I do not recall its specifics. Some of those who have seen it have said that it is one of the best written in this art. Others have said that it is a dissertation about following the path of Ahl al-Bayt ('a)' (A`yan al-Shi`a, Vol. ۶, p. ۱۱۹).

The great researching critic, Shaikh Agha Buzurg al-Tahrani, has commented about his book saying the following in his own book Al-Thari`ah: 'I found it at the library of our good master scholar, Sadr ad-Din al-Kazimi, who appreciated it greatly and used to say, 'I never came across a speech better than his in the field of ethics except, perhaps, the wise statements of the beauty of the one who did tread the path, i.e. Sayyid Radiy ad-Din Ali ibn Tawus.' He has concluded saying that its author is one of the later faqihs and scholars of al-Najaf who specialized in hadith and biographies.' (Al-Thari`ah, Vol. ۱, No. ۳۷۲).

In his book titled Al-Kuna wal Alqab, al-Qummi, the traditionist, has said the following: 'The great spiritual mentor, Shaikh Husain ibn Ali ibn Sadiq al-Bahrani, in his dissertation on ethics and on how to seek a path to Allah according to the way of Ahl al-Bayt..., etc.' ((Al-Kuna wal Alqab, Vol. ۱, p. ۳۲۹).

Although there is not much information about the author in biography books except what

we have indicated above, the greatness of the writer manifests itself through his books. A book is a mirror reflecting its writer especially if we notice how his ideas find their way to the hearts thirsty for such type of writings. These writings have to be offered to our contemporary society which has been distracted by the life in this world in a way .unmatched in history

We are not accustomed to seeing such portraits of infatuation displayed in a most unusual way throughout the history of mankind. Man is still the same in his limited abilities, frail before the forces of desire and anger. In his struggle, he faces a foe quite experienced in tempting since the creation of Adam, peace be upon him, while the portraits of temptation, i.e. the arrows of Eblis in all fields, keep getting more and more complete and widespread day after day. We do not know where this caravan, speeding .towards what causes deterioration and annihilation, will finally settle

Those who are concerned about the matters of the psyche must concentrate their efforts on finding a new method to resist these tumultuous waves stirred by the devils of the jinns and of mankind. No longer do the ancient preaching method and some ethical curricula, which are based on the style of general recommendations empty of divisions, and the idealistic requirements lacking practical means, suffice to curb the souls that are .torn with confusion between what nature demands and the demands of the Shari`ah

We

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are in need of another style of writing in the language of our time, one addressing the new obstacles, in a gradual scientific style, and in clear practical steps, for training the soul is like training the bodies: it has its own principles and their results cannot be .achieved except through first: the gradual process and, second, on the practical field

In order to complete the discussion of what is useful, and in order to point out to the important points in the author's book, we tried, as much as opportunity permitted us, to comment on such points in a way that makes the issue more clear and the idea more condensed, while making a reference to the sources of the ahadith which were not included in its first revised edition. We have to point out that we could not find the sources of some ahadith quoted in the book because the compiler copied their gist as he mentioned at the beginning of his book saying, 'Do not try to transmit the specific '.utterances, for what is intended is a mere reference

May Allah Almighty, through His munificence and generosity, include us among those who receive the rewards of what the hand of this spiritual scholar recorded in his book which has quite often taken control of the hearts yearning to rid themselves of the captivity of .materialism and desiring to ascend to the realm of the angels

Finally, we would like to say this: It seems that fate did not permit the

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author to finish his book, as he stated at its end, hoping that someone else would succeed him in finishing it. We, therefore, plead to Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, to consider what we have commented on his book to be the completion which he hoped for. .May Allah Almighty grant him the fulfillment of his wishes in the world of the Hereafter

Lord! Accept our effort; You are the all-Hearing, the all-Knowing. Lord! Make us endeavor to bring the hearts closer to You. Who is more worthy than You to reside in such a heart which You wished to be Your shrine, whereas we have made it a haven for everything ?!that perishes except You

:And the last of our supplication is

'.All Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds'

Habib al-Kazimi

Thul-Hijja ٣, ١٤٢٢

Authors Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

All Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and the good outcome belongs to the pious; Allah bless His chosen elite ones, the choicest from among those whom He favors, the manifestation of His kindness to the world, namely Muhammad ('s) and his Pure .(Progeny ('a

The sinning servant of Allah ('a), the perishing captive, Husain son of Ali ibn Sadiq al-Bahrani, says that he is seeking help from his Lord, relying on Him, soliciting all of that through the one whom He loves the most from among His creation, to compile excerpts from the pieces of advice of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to

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their followers so that they (‘a) may thereby provide guidance to their servants, and so .that the latter’s hearts may live

dark minds, because of indulgence in whims and desires which insinuate the committing of sins and transgressions, may thus be enlightened. I hope Allah will grant me His support and assistance and make this a treasure for the Day of Returning to Him; He is the most Generous, the most Giving. Upon Him is my reliance and dependence, and He !suffices me; how Great is the One upon Whom I rely

Let us provide for this book an Introduction explaining the purpose of confirming these statements and attracting attention to these niceties. I used to often indulge my soul, which repeatedly inclines to what is wrong, in the hope that I would compile useful legacies from Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) so that such indifferent hearts may wake up, so that these dead souls may come back to life after having turned away from Allah and shunned Him. But my inactivity always stopped me from doing so. I took to laziness, causing my own .harm

If knowledge is not applied, it will only cause the knowledgeable person to get even further from Allah, and it cannot be expected to affect the hearts. This is so based on what is transmitted about Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) who advised that if a scholar did not implement his knowledge, his admonishment would be removed from the hearts; such is stated in Vol. ۱, p. ۴۴, of

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.Al-Kafi

When I saw how my life-span was approaching its expiration and how the end was nigh, I was of the view that procrastination was of no avail and excuses were futile. This led me to seek the opinion of some loved ones. Because of the desire of some close friends of mine, I sought advice from Allah, praise to Him, with the intention that this would be my .own self-admonishment, perhaps my soul would be reawakened

I anticipated it would bring me goodness and a blessing because it is a response to the wish of my brethren and a means of seeking nearness to Allah, the Praised One, through .serving the tales of Ahl al-Bayt, and I hoped He would thus honor me

I decided, with the will and power of Allah, to compile incidents relevant to Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in various chapters and from different sources without mentioning the references or investigating the exact text of statements, for their contexts are accepted by sound minds which believe in them, and a straightforward nature testifies for them. What is meant is mere reference; all help is sought from Allah; from Him comes any action's .success; upon Him one must rely

Chapter ۱: The Need to Cultivate Ethics, Benefits and the Necessity to Pay Attention to It

,Be informed, may Allah assist you, that the Prophet ('s) has said

I was sent (to mankind) in order to perfect the virtues of ethics' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۶۸, p.' .(۳۸۲

There is no confusion in this statement, for anything relevant to the Hereafter and to our sustenance cannot be in order,

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nor can its seeker be happy, except through good manners. Much of a good deed does not help without cultivating and correcting one's conduct. Actually, a bad conduct only spoils a good deed just as vinegar spoils honey (Usul Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٣٢). What benefit is ?there in anything the outcome of which is spoilage

Do not be misled into thinking that a great deal of knowledge without correcting and ,cultivating one's conduct can be of any use. Never! Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have said

Do not be tyrannical scholars so your falsehood may wipe out your righteousness' (al-' .(Saduq's Amali, Vol. ٩, p. ٢٩۴

Nor should you be misled into thinking that a bad mannered person can be happy(١) in' the company of a father, a son, a spouse, a friend, a companion, a family, a teacher or a student. Nay! They all are harmed by him, and they find his conduct offensive; so, how can he attain the means of perfection which are scattered among the people while those who are perfect shun and run away from him?! And be further informed that anyone who discerns the path of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, studying their legacy, will find how they guided mankind, attracted people to the creed, all through their good manners, ordering their followers to do likewise saying, 'Invite people [to your creed] but not with ,(your tongues.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ۴۶

meaning through good manners and beautiful deeds, so that they may be role models for those who

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The author's discussion is very important for attracting those who cannot be attracted -١ by spiritual ideologies which need spiritual maturity such as seeking the degree of

pleasing the Almighty and looking forward to the Glorious Countenance, etc. No wise person refuses to seek social happiness and a stable worldly livelihood besides the desire for a commendable outcome, be it during the period of the barzakh or on Judgment Day. Thereupon, treading this path guarantees comfort for the heart as well as social stability. Both objectives are lost by those who love this world when they distance themselves from the divine order. __ Editor

.emulate

So, if it becomes obvious that seeking this life or the life to come can both be complete through good manners, and that complementing the code of ethics is the benefit of the Message without which life can never be good, it becomes also obvious that cultivating manners has a precedence over any other obligation and is more important than any .obligation

It is the key to everything good, the source of everything beautiful, the one which brings about every fruit, the basis of any objective. Look how even the unbelievers are rewarded on account of their good manners, how anyone who accustomed himself to opposing the insinuations of the nafs (self) led him to belief. And see how a generous captive was held in the custody of the Prophet ('s), whereupon Gabriel ('a) descended ,from Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, with the message saying

',Do not kill him; he is generous'

thus his life was saved from a swift termination, earning him Paradise later on (Bihar al-.(Anwar, Vol. ۶۸, p ۳۹۰

If you know this much by way of introduction which, were one to choose and to test, proves to be accurate, be informed, may Allah grant you success and guidance, that Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have set the bases for the code of ethics and for the principles and restrictions which, if observed, help one earn good manners easily and conveniently, neither with a .concerted effort nor with any hardship, as the scholars of ethics tell us

(The Prophet ('s

brought us the Islamic Shari`ah which is tolerant and easy to implement, thus agreeing with what His Lord, the most Exalted and the most Great, has told us, that is, He does not want to impose any hardship on us, nor does He wish we should put ourselves under undue constriction. Rather, He has placed no compulsion in the creed. The same applies to the knowledge of its methodology: He opened the gates of ease for us, closing those of hardship. So, Satan should not discourage you from taking your share of the science of mannerism, telling you that this is something quite difficult and relies on waging a struggle against one's self, requiring exhausting confrontations; so, how can you do ?!that

If we take a look at those who did, indeed, undertake venues of hardship and who met challenging confrontations, we will find out that these did not get them to reach anything but the achievement of worldly objectives and lowly goals; they did not delve deeply into)the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a), nor did they emulate them.(١

The origin of this concept and its explanation are as follows: You should keep in mind that Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, through the beauty of His wisdom and favor, has dazzled the minds, testing the mindful, requiring the beings to undertake great matters, making .the keys to the latter unimportant particles

So, if anyone deems the pathways to them as great and becomes neglectful in their regard, he misses

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١- The compiler has pointed out here to a serious phenomenon which often hurled those who feigned treading on the path to Allah Almighty into delusion, so they confined the path to self-torture through exercises which Allah Almighty never enjoined. Thus, they lost the pleasure of this life and they did not attain the pleasure of the life to come. The secret here is in their making the struggle against their desires a pretext to obtain some of the wares of this life, even if this won them admirers, due to their knowledge that controlling the self in its various forces makes this notion effective in some issues. The self is a force like any other in this life. It is full of amazing secrets. Just as worldly forces

do amazing things on the horizons, the energies of the self do amazing things in the realm of the self. But let us wonder and ask: Were we created for such things?! Were we ?required to struggle in order to earn some of the strokes of luck for our own selves

what he is required to do. Such is the greatest of all tests to him. And anyone who seeks his objectives through these 'partial' matters, they will get him to attain the total demands of the soul. He did not undertake except what is small, insignificant, yet the same got him to earn a lot for himself; this is the source of the greatest happiness for him.

Consider, then, such a great wisdom and carefully look into it and you will then see how He confronted His creation with such a momentous evidence, perfecting such a generous blessing for them. What a blessing it is! How did He help them, through such 'particles', attain such lofty stations?! And what a great evidence it is! How did they expose themselves to a perpetual perdition and painful torment while the doing of very small things could have saved them?!

Anyone who considers such wisdom and derives a light torch from the legacy of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) will find the meaning of the following hadith quite clear:

'One who regards a little sustenance as insignificant will be deprived of the plenty thereof' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٢٠٧).

Also, the principle of goodness springs out of the meaning of this hadith; one who does not take a little sustenance lightly will not be deprived of plenty of it.

If you follow this meaning, you will find its testimonies in the perfect Rope and in countless narratives such as this:

'Beware of minor sins' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٢٠٧).

:Another is

Do not'

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‘,take a form of obedience [to the Commandments of Allah] lightly

for it may please Allah Almighty; nor should you take an act of disobedience lightly, for it may incur the Wrath of Allah. There are many such statements left for us by them, may Allah be pleased with them. It becomes clear for anyone who seeks light and guidance that the way of the glorious Shari`ah of Muhammad (‘s) is built on minor things which are easy to undertake and, by the will of Allah, get one who implements them to attain the most lofty of goals and the most pleasing of desires(۱). This idea becomes more clear to anyone who contemplates on he Qudsi hadith wherein the Lord of Dignity, Praise to Him, ,says

If one gets closer to Me the distance of a span, I shall get closer to him the distance of a’ .(yard..., etc.’ (Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah, p. ۱۲۹

If He, the Praised One, gets closer to anyone who gets closer to him, inviting back to Himself whoever runs away from Him, what would you say about one who willingly goes to Him and knocks at His door?! Suffices you the following statement of the Master of :Worshippers at sahar time

and one who travels to You has a short distance to cross; You do not conceal Yourself ...’ from Your creation except when their own hopes shield them from You’ or, in some ‘.copies, ‘... except when their own wrongdoings shield them from You

So, O my Brother who is

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١ – Such an enticing method is effective with the souls that fear initiating a movement after awakening, thinking that the path to the Hereafter robs the world of its pleasures, and that the matter needs exhausting struggles such as those undertaken by the ones who make such exercises from among the followers of deviated sects, even from among the unbelievers, and that the goals are not achieved except through hardships, impossible things and other such discouragement. The reality is that the Shari`ah never prohibited anything in the absence of something permissible besides it as its alternative. The circle of obligations, the 'do's' and 'don'ts', is much smaller than that of what is permissible, without any comparison. So, where is the hardship which a servant of Allah uses as a pretext to remain inactive and to thus resort to a life wherein one is like a brute concerned only about its animal feed, staying busy dirtying?!

seeking nearness to Allah, desiring such a lofty status! Listen to my advice which is derived from the lantern of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) because whoever seeks a way other than :theirs, his way shall lead him to hell. This advice is as follows

You have come to know that a servant of Allah is required to adorn himself with good manners which, due to their distinction, are attributed to the Lord of Dignity. Ahl al-Bayt ,(‘a) are quoted as having said

Adorn yourselves with Allah’s ethics’ (al-Sabzawari, Sharh al-Asma’ al-Husna, Vol. ٢, p.’ ,(۴١

and they are the ethics of Muhammad (‘s), of his pure and righteous Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and of .their followers

Be further informed that the premise and system of this meaning is to sit on the carpet of straightforwardness, avoiding extravagance or exclusion. You, therefore, should seek nearness to Allah through whatever you can uphold of deeds of obedience to Him and of avoidance of whatever sins He holds in contempt. Make up your mind not to ignore anything partial or total; everything you know to be good you should do even if it appears to you to be small, insignificant. And everything you know as wrong you should be .determined to abandon and to avoid even if it seems to you to be insignificant

Do not take anything lightly with regard to what is partial or total. Rather, you must be concerned about precision and restriction. Beware of doing many deeds without observing how to perfect them. One thing

you perfect and you accomplish as it should be results in thousands of good deeds. Thousands of good deeds which are not perfected do not produce one good deed which is perfected and is done with precision. There is no way to compare this with that for the people of knowledge and wisdom(۱).

I do not tell you that you must be perfect in doing anything partial or total because you will then find it too much and say, 'How can I do that, knowing who I am?!' Rather, I tell you that you should not excuse yourself when you deliberately do a faulty job with regard to anything partial, forgiving yourself for it. But if your shortcoming is due to submission to whims and desires of your own, in response to self-deception and to the insinuations of Satan, this is quite something else. Such is the doing of someone who is not infallible. Our objective is to accustom ourselves not to take things lightly, not to be neglectful and forgiving of our own shortcomings.

These are the partial things relevant to the Shari`ah which, if we get accustomed to doing them and not be deliberately negligent in their regard, will elevate us and help us reach lofty stations. Allah, Praise to Him, has made them the keys to such treasures; one who holds the keys to the treasures in his hand has enriched himself and has won a great victory.

Had it not been for the risk of being repetitive, I would

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۱- These are portraits of reality and logic in the method employed by the author. He tries to raise the one who treads the path to the station of always establishing a link between the causes and the outcomes, and that a deed must not be undertaken by a servant of Allah separately from its anticipated goal which is: realizing a total worship of Allah, Lord of the Worlds. Deeds which do not achieve this goal are worthless. Their doing may be to impress others, or they may distract one from doing something more important, or they

may cause him to be conceited and arrogant, or they may cause the soul to dislike the ...main Path

have explained the above in detail, bringing numerous examples, and it is worthy of all of that, for it is the most perfected and accomplished gate which opens a thousand other gates of Divine wisdom. Perhaps we will explain it more in the following Chapters by the .Will of Allah

Chapter ٢: Preference of Delving into the Science of Ethics and Spending Some Time of Ones Life Therein

Be informed that some righteous and kind brothers, who are free of impurities, those who struggle against the evil-insinuating self, have been confused. When Satan the accursed saw them thus struggling against their desires, something which is better than jihad, so much so that the Prophet (‘s) called it the ‘supreme jihad,’ he wanted to deceive them :away from it, casting a great misconception into their hearts. It is the following

The observing of admonitions and counsels and disseminating them, seeking them and struggling to achieve them, which is the basis of the science of Akhlaq, all lack preference. When we see ourselves doing the opposite of what we know, we notice that this is detrimental and more supportive of the argument against a servant of Allah. Indifference and negligence will in this case be more appropriate and a better course, for the sin of .someone who knows is different from the sin of one who does not

The least one knows and the more limited his scope of warning signs and norms of threats is, the less pretentious he becomes and the more worthy of being excused; one .who knows is not like one who does not

When I

heard them expressing such a concept and came to know that it is one of the tricks of Satan the Accursed, I drew their attention to an incident narrated by Shaikh al-Hurr in his book titled Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah in a chapter dealing with Qudsi ahadith. This incident .rebuts this misconception, uprooting it and rendering it null and void

The gist of the incident is that Allah, the most Glorified One, says, 'Do not say, `We fear, if we come to know, not to apply our knowledge.' Rather, you should say, `We learn, and we hope we will act upon our knowledge,' for I did not enforce anything on you except to make it as means of mercy for you.' This text exists in Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah with minor .wording variation

Such a Divine statement is the best rebuttal of this misconception. Had it not been for Satan's trickery, there would have been no room for confusion that requires dispelling, .but this Divine rebuttal suffices for a refutation

We would like to provide you with further explanations whereby you can come to know how clear the issue of knowledge and acting upon it is and the fruit of each, and you will find what makes up this chapter the preference of knowledge and its fruits; so, let us say that it is well known that knowledge is useless if not acted upon. It is just like doing something without knowledge. But a servant of Allah is ordered to adhere to both of them: each

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.of them supports and strengthens the other

One who seeks knowledge not to act upon it but to brag about it, to cover with the beauties of knowledge and its prevalent beauty and glitter among the people the ugliness of his own actions as well as his ugly dispositions, there is no doubt that he is a friend of Eblis the accursed. His knowledge is his own curse, and the curse of others, so much so that even the inmates of hell complain about his harm. He is one of those who bear their burdens and the burdens of others as well. He is a demon in a human form; we seek refuge with Allah against him. Such is the case also of one who uses knowledge as a habit on which he accustoms himself(۱), thus turning it into a pretense and a reputation commended by people without knowledge or insight, such a person is a donkey tied to the .first, though he is less harmful to the servants of Allah

But if one is rational in his comprehension, seeking what reforms himself and brings him happiness in this world and in the next, he is the one who turns to Allah, seeking what is with Him, and he is the one to whom the addresses of this art are directed in order to .cultivate him, raise his status with regard to what he seeks

Let him know that whenever a gate to knowledge opens for him, acting upon it becomes ,easier

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۱- This refers to a point which must not be overlooked by the elite. Knowledge is nothing but the manifestation of the reality of the intellect in its best condition; otherwise, the cases of incompatibility and compounded ignorance are prevalent in all branches of knowledge. Thereupon, making a profession of storing a portrait of the reality in one's sub-conscience and deriving pleasure from so doing, such as one who collects books just to make a show, can never be regarded as something sacred which brings the servant closer to the supreme truth. Accumulated knowledge which is not implemented, therefore, may turn into an occupation to which one gets accustomed. He, hence, will not

consider the Hereafter acting upon it because this will reveal intellectual discoveries .regarded as worthless in the outside world

and it increases his agility and desire. Whenever he acts upon what Allah grants him of knowledge, this will let him inherit the knowledge of that which he did not know before, thus increasing his knowledge, as we are told by Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) who have said that one who acts upon the knowledge which he acquires will inherit the knowledge of what he .never knew before

This, in reality, renders his action a norm of knowledge, for such knowledge shall succeed him and earn good things for him, so he becomes included among those who seek the .type of knowledge which many narratives have praised and preferred

Also, his knowledge, learning and teaching are all among the best branches of knowledge. It is then that such a servant earns perfect happiness through the knowledge which prompts one to act upon it, a deed springing out of knowledge and the happiness which is perfected through the compounded accumulation of knowledge and action. Yet the best portion of both in the sight of Allah is knowledge itself; it is through it that one servant of .Allah is distinguished from another

,Our master, the Commander of the Faithful (‘a), has said

A touch of knowledge is better than a great deal of deeds, and they both are like’ intention and action: intention receives distinction. Or they may be compared with the ‘.soul and the body: the soul is distinctive

What we have stated here should suffice one who seeks guidance, and surely Allah is the Master

p: ٢٠

.of success

Chapter ۳: Allah Created Us to Live Happily Forever; He prepared Us for Such Happiness

Be informed that Allah created mankind to live forever happily. Life in the Hereafter has no end. Allah has made the life in this world like a farm wherein one plants something in order to reap its fruit in the Hereafter, basing the reward in the life to come on the deeds in this life. The servants of Allah prepare themselves for such an eternal life through their (deeds in this life.(۱

Undoubtedly, had such a short-lived life-span, such a short time to live, been spent with adoration to the extent that Allah is not disobeyed even for a twinkling of an eye, nor is one breath spent except in obedience to Allah, it still by necessity and commonsense falls short of qualifying for such rewards. Therefore, it is by virtue of the dictates of the Divine kindness and mercy that Allah opens for His servants the gates of His generosity, thus qualifying them to be rewarded with what has no end nor diminution; each and every .blessing starts from Him; each and every act of His kindness is out of His own favor

The first manifestation of His generosity and kindness to His servants is that He does not terminate the outcomes of their deeds when their life-spans terminate. Rather, He has made such life-spans equivalent to the duration of life itself, measured by the days they .are acted upon and by those who put them to action

He did so by making one of His injunctions is

p: ۲۱

۱- Paying attention to the brevity of one's life-span prompts him to remain vigilant and to motivate him as he moves to do anything at all. Man naturally loves for himself what is

good and desires goodness and eternity even as he confuses himself while identifying the sources of what is good and what is not, as is obvious. Thereupon, to absorb the notion that life is very brief and that the happiness or the misery of such eternity is defined by this limited life-span makes every temporary moment equivalent to perpetuity. It is well known that such a rational comparison, to which he is invited by both the Shari`ah and by transmitted incidents, changes one to a being who is very careful about each and every moment of his life. He is also concerned about doing what is best to fill this short period which will determine one's eternal faith: either perpetual damnation in hell, or a perpetual .bliss in heaven

that if someone starts a tradition wherein there is guidance for people, he will receive its rewards as well as the rewards of all those who implement it till the Day of Judgment. Likewise, if anyone initiates an evil tradition, he will bear its sin as well as the sins of all .(those who act upon it till the Day of Judgment (Waram Collection, Vol. ۲, p. ۲۳۶

He also makes one of His injunctions letting parents share in the good deeds done by their offspring by virtue of the parents being the reason for the existence of the offspring, .and this chain of offspring is endless

He also made the rewards of some good deeds the creation, out of them, of angels who worship Him till the Day of Judgment, assigning the rewards of such worship to the person who performed such good deeds. Also, He opened a gate from which His mercy descends upon them, considering the rewards of a night's good deeds equivalent to those of one thousand months: Allah, the most Praised One, has told us: 'The Night of '.Destiny (Lailatul-Qadr) is better than a thousand months

He also has regarded one hour's contemplation equivalent to sixty years of adoration (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۱۷, p. ۳۲۷ where the reward is recorded as equivalent to one year) (according to some narratives.(۱

He made the night's stay at the shrine of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) equivalent to .seven hundred years' adoration

He made taking care of a believer's need equivalent to

Some references states hat one hour's contemplation is better than a year's adoration. -۱ As for sixty years, rewards, it is reported about one who falls sick while performing the pilgrimage in Mecca (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. ۹, p. ۳۶۴) and for one who learns two ahadith or who teaches them to others, thus reaping their benefits (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۲, p. ۱۵۲), for one who implements justice even for one hour (Jami` al-Akhbar, p. ۱۱۹), and for one who falls sick and accepts such sickness wholeheartedly. About the latter, the Imam ('a) has said, 'He does not complain about what afflicted him to anyone.' (Mishkat al-Anwar, p. ۲۸۱).

the adoration of nine thousand years during which one spends the day fasting and the .(night praying (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٧۴, p. ٣١۵

.He made the fast of three days a month equivalent to fasting for eternity

All of these are indications of His kindness towards His believing servants, thus granting them His favors in order to qualify them to reach the station of spending all their life-span in obedience to Him so that they will yearn to such precious qualification earned through .His generosity and open-handedness

Yet all of this is still not much compared to what He wants to qualify them as a compensation for spending eternity worshipping and obeying Him, the most Exalted One, the most Great. He, therefore, completed His favors to them by opening a gate for rewarding even their intentions, making such intentions rewardable with more rewards than the actual implementation thereof. He thus decreed that the believers= intentions, had they been kept in this world for eternity, would have continued thus obeying Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great. Thus, He granted them the rewards of those who forever obey Him, making their eternal stay in Paradise the reward for such good .intentions

Likewise, had the unbelievers, because of their ill intentions, stayed alive forever, they would have forever remained disobedient to Him. He, hence, rewarded them by eternally .tormenting them

So, my Brother seeker of guidance, be informed that your actions are based on continuation, not on cessation, even if you see them as temporal, for some

p: ۲۳

transmissions state that happy is one whose sins die when he himself dies. In other words, he should be happy when such sins are not emulated by others; otherwise, he will have to bear the burden of anyone who emulates him in committing them till the Day of Judgment.

A sin, may Allah shelter us from it, is serial by nature except if Allah, out of His kindness, effaces and removes it. So, beware of committing sins, for they may bear an impact on your offspring and your offspring's offspring, and so on. Let your desire be to obey Allah. Anything intended for Allah grows. One of the signs of its growth is that it continues to bear an impact till the end of time, affecting the offspring and the offspring's offspring and so on till the Day of Judgment. Remain, therefore, vigilant, and do not be indifferent.(۱)

Chapter ۴: Some Venues Leading to Allah Almighty

Be informed that there are venues which lead to Allah and which number as many as the beings themselves(۲). For each of Allah's creation there are as many paths leading to Him as many as there are beings. A wretch is one who sees the mercy of Allah as straitened though it encompasses everything.

Be informed that there is no way bringing success than thinking well of Allah, for He is according to what His believing servant thinks of Him: good for good and vice versa. People are accustomed, by their evil-insinuating souls, and because of Satan, to think ill of their

۱- Most books do not lack this piece of advice. One who is busy committing a sin, though minor, is not prepared to take this journey which requires the traveller to be accepted by

his Master. Success in undertaking such a path depends on the Divine blessings which guide the servant of Allah. These cannot be earned by a servant who exposes himself to the Wrath of his Master, the One Who grants such blessings. It is well known that a sin, though minor except if we commit it against someone great, thus making such a sin quite serious, causes one to feel ashamed and frightened once he looks deeply into it. This is why it is customary for all those who tread this path to keep seeking Allah's forgiveness in order to renew their covenant with the Lord Whom we have never come to know as He ought to be known nor worshipped as He ought to be worshipped. As for the prophets and wasis, peace be upon them, who do seek Allah's forgiveness, they seek it in order to express their humility to Him, deeming Him Great. In addition to that, their conditions sometimes change from the highest to the high, and such a change obligates them to .always seek forgiveness

This is a fact which increases the insight of the servant of Allah as he treads towards -۲ Allah Almighty. There is no fixed equation about the particularities of seeking Him. Every period of time, place, individual and circumstance has its own requirements and obstacles. This is why the venues have been so numerous though the path is one and the same. Allah, hence, made the first plural and the second singular as we see in the Qur'an. Here, one should not be too much concerned about the particularities of an individual treading the path, though he may get there, because each individual has his own circumstances and obligations. Getting to know the most suitable path is the concern of all those who tread this path. There is no problem with the obligatory injunction from the Shari`ah to get to know this fact from what is narrated in the fiqh. Rather, the problem is inherent in the personal events an individual undergoes wherein there is no role for fiqh to play such as the issue of so many more, or most, important things there are. For this, one who treads the path needs a keen insight to know the most straight venue compared with other straight ones. These may be achieved either by getting a sense of apprehension or of conviction of it, or by being coerced to take the right course even if one is not aware of being coerced. Or it may be done through the recommendations of those endowed with knowledge for whom the gates are opened, hence Allah inspires their intellects and addresses their power of reasoning. Thus, they dawned fully awake in their hearing, vision and comprehension (Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. ۲, p. ۲۱۱). The Prophet ('s) has said, 'Beware of the believer's ferocity, for he sees through the noor of Allah.' (Bas'air .(al-Darajat, p. ۳۷۵

.Lord

They are swift to have presentiments, to feel despondent at the mere witnessing of the signs of affliction. They are frightened because of the severity of the affliction, feeling certain it is befalling them, so they fall into that from which they try to flee, and whatever affliction they were afraid of will come to pass; we seek refuge with Allah from any kind of .such ill thinking

You have already come to know that such ill thinking qualifies a servant to be dealt with accordingly because of such ill thoughts except if Allah, the Praised One, forgives him. The Prophet (ʻs) used to always love to be optimistic and to hate pessimism (Bihar al-Anwar, .(Vol. ۹۲, p. ۲

Pessimism is according to what a pessimist envisions: If he sees it as severe, so will it be, and if he sees it as light, so will it be, too. And if he does not pay any attention to it, it will .(be as though it was never there (Rawdat Al-Kafi, p. ۱۹۷

A believer who tries to follow in the footsteps of Ahl al-Bayt (ʻa) must accustom himself to thinking well of his Lord, expecting Allah to reward him with plenty for the little that he does. He, Praise to Him, is the only One Who gives plenty for little. Whatever good things you expect of Him, and whatever you think of the norms of His generosity, He is more ,than what you think: Your mental scope is limited while His generosity

p: ۲۵

.Praise to Him, has no limit

He, Glory to Him, has already informed you that He is according to your good thoughts of Him. Our master, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), has said, 'Whoever thinks well of you, you should prove him right' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۴, p. ۲۱۲). Actually, some incidents and legacies tell us that one who thinks well of something, Allah will prove him right and facilitate for him according to his good expectation, as if this is linked to thinking well of Allah. This is so because the meaning of thinking well of someone is rendered to thinking well of Allah Who instilled in him such hidden yet known goodness, that is, the source of .everything good is Allah; Allah, therefore, actualizes such a notion, proving its accuracy

One particular hadith clearly states that if anyone thinks well even of a stone, Allah will place a lot of goodness in it. The person who transmitted this tradition, thereupon, asked ,the Imam ('a), '... a stone?!' The Imam ('a) said

(Don't you see the Black Stone?!'(۱'

One deducts from the above that Allah, Praise and Exaltation are His, proves the good intentions of those who believe in Him with regard to each other, letting such intentions .materialize

Another example is the testimony of those who testify for a deceased person, saying that they did not know anything about him but good things, drawing on thinking well of others, .actually on their lack of knowledge of anything bad about him

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۱ - I have not come across this tradition in the references at my disposal, yet the narrative, if we suppose there is one as such, wants to point to the elements of this existence as being capable of receiving blessings from the Lord. Although all things in

existence are equal in standing before Him, their Originator, yet, because of matters with which only He is familiar, some of them are chosen by Him to receive His kindness, such as certain sacred places and blessed times. They, therefore, are transformed, after receiving such honoring, to serve one of His affairs. Thus, their characteristics and effects become distinguished from those of their peers in existence. Here is Joseph's coat: upon being put on his father's face, vision is restored to his father. And here is the Arch of Covenant wherein there is tranquility for them from their Lord. And here is a handful from the footprints of the Messenger which performs miraculous things. And here is the Black Stone, according to the afore-mentioned tradition, which has been made like His right hand on earth. All of these things are intangible; so, what would happen if the matter applies to the world of articulate beings, the souls which submitted to their Lord willingly such as the souls of the Infallible ones ('a)?!

The hadith states that Allah sanctions their testimony, forgives them and forgives him whatever He knows which they do not know. The requirement of good intention is that Allah permits it to materialize with regard to the person who thus thinks as well as the subject of the thought except when there is a strong obstacle hindering its application to .one who thus thinks of him or of it

In this case, Allah helps its materialization to the other party. Other legacies indicate that a man may be generous to another man based on his assumption that he is good, so Allah permits him, on its account, to enter Paradise even when Allah knows that the person to whom this man was generous is one of the inmates of the Fire. This is a case when there is a strong obstacle in the way of realizing the good thought about the man who receives such generosity, so the reward is the lot of the other person because of his good .intention

The outcome of all of this is that anyone who acts upon what he is commanded, that is, to think well of his believing brethren, will never be disappointed. His good intention may prove to be accurate, or the matter will be turned according to his own good intention through the mercy of Allah, or He may help such a good intention materialize. If nothing good reaches the person of whom he thinks well, this will not harm him in

p: ۲۷

.the least

This is a great lesson in thinking well of the believers. Perhaps it is based on this concept that the congregational prayer is accepted, for those who follow the Imam think well of him, so they pray behind him, advancing him as intermediary between them and Allah in .the acceptance of their prayers

Allah, therefore, grants them their wish, accepting the prayers of everyone because they thought well of Him. There are other examples of such good intentions such as one who drinks from the remnant of a believer's ablution water seeking blessings, and it is like drinking the water of Zamzam. Both Martyrs have said, 'A group of highly distinguished men drank of the water of Zamzam seeking the realization of religious and secular .(objectives, earning them all' (Sharh al-Lam`a al-Dimashqiyya, Vol. ۲, p. ۳۲۹

Some supplications contain admonishment that the best of the means of earning :sustenance is supplication. One states the following

.(Lord! Grant me conviction and to think well of You' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۹۵, p. ۹۵'

The ahadith contain something even more impressive, that is, Allah grants the realization ,of a good intention even if it is false. Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) is quoted as having said

On the Day of Judgment, a servant is brought, and he is ordered to be hurled into the' Fire. The servant turns back, whereupon Allah, Glory and Exaltation are His, says, 'Bring him back.' When he is brought back, Allah asks him, 'O My servant! Why did you turn back ?'to Me

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He answers saying, 'Lord! I did not think of You to be like that!' Allah, the most Great One, asks him, 'What did you think of Me, then?' The man would say, 'I thought that You would forgive me and permit me to reside, through Your mercy, in Your Paradise.' Allah, the most Exalted One, would say, 'O My angels! I swear by My Dignity and Greatness, by my Loftiness of Station, that this man never thought of Me well even for one moment. Had he thought well of Me even for a moment, I would not have terrified him with the Fire. Sanction his life and lodge him in Paradise.' (Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah, p. ۲۷۰). (۱)

Look into this incident and you will see what cannot be described. It is through a tradition such as this and through observing its likes of the Divine boons that our good intentions are strengthened and our hopes for an inclination by the Lord of Greatness be included under thinking well of Allah. If they are not from it, they are no less than pretensions.

You have already come to know how He sanctions them and treats them as though they were real. His judgment in both places is one and the same: '... you will see no want of proportion in the creation of (Allah) the Most Gracious One.' (Qur'an, ۶۷:۳).

Be informed that merely thinking well of Allah does not mean that one should remain inactive, leaving aside the doing of good deeds with

p: ۲۹

۱- This is a narrative that instills hope in the hearts of many people. Look at such mercy which encompasses even those who are the least qualified [on account of being liars] to pretend to think well of Allah; so, what would you say about one who sincerely anticipates His mercy?! What about one who implements such anticipation in his life?! Yet we again wonder: How many are those who are aware of the weight of such a statement articulated by such a servant on the Day of Judgment? Had all the people gathered together on the Day of Gathering applied it, they would all have attained salvation! But the Almighty is the One Who instructs His servant as to how he argues with Him on the Day when He meets Him because of what He saw him doing in the life of this world and

.whereby he deserves such munificence on such a terrifying Day

the excuse that He thinks well of Allah, for this is one of the tricks of Satan the Accursed, may Allah grant us refuge from his mischief together with all those who believe in .(Muhammad (‘s) and his purified Progeny (‘a

Rather, it obligates one to be attracted to what Allah has in store with Him and to strongly desire what Allah grants. If one loves what Allah has to offer, he will be attracted to His grants, considering any hardship as easy. If one knows what he seeks, it will be easy for .him to undertake the effort

Our master, al-Ridha’ (‘a), is quoted as having said, ‘Allah revealed to [Prophet] David (‘a) ,saying

A servant of Mine may come to Me with one good deed whereby I grant him Paradise. He’ was asked, ‘Lord! What is this good deed?’ He said, ‘He removes the worry of a believer even with half a date.’ David (‘a) said, ‘Anyone who truly gets to know You can never lose .(.hope [of receiving Your mercy]’ (Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah, p. ۷۹

So, if the most Exalted One and the most Great grants this great Paradise, the width of which is like that of the heavens and the earth, in exchange for half a date [given by way of charity], I plead to you in the Name of Allah to answer me: How can anyone stop dealing with such a Generous One and become indifferent to such dealing even for a ?!twinkling of an eye

What would be

p: ۳۰

one's alternative? If one lost a moment wherein he did not pay his full attention to Allah, what can his compensation for his loss be? Never! He has surely missed something for .which there is no compensation and has cheated himself irreparably

It is for such a conclusion, and due to the intensity of Allah's compassion towards His believing servants, that the glorious Shari`ah came to arrange the great rewards for the believers when they move or when they do not, so much so that Imam Ali son of Imam al-Husain ('a) taught his followers to recite the following supplication: ALord!

Let our heartbeats, the movements of our parts, the twinkling of our eyes and whatever we utter be worthy of receiving Your rewards'. (Al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah, p. ۶۰). He ('a) :has also said the following in some of his supplications

and I seek Your forgiveness on account of every pleasure attained without ...' .(remembering You' (the ۱۵th munajat

Allah Almighty wants His servants not to lose a loss for which there is no compensation by being too indifferent to deal with Him, thus missing His rewards for even the twinkling of an eye. This is why He has made the venues leading to Him count as many as His beings, so much so that one who drinks water and remembers the thirst of al-Husain ('a) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), so he condemns his killer, Allah writes down for him a hundred thousand good deeds, wipes from him a hundred thousand sins, raises

p: ۳۱

his status a hundred thousand degrees, regards him as though he set free a hundred thousand slaves and resurrects him on the Day of Judgment with a cool heart (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۶, p. ۱۹۳).

Can you imagine that the One Who thus grants, who prepares such rewards, agrees to let His servant, who needs Him, the Absolute Rich One that He is, waste even one breath which he draws? Never! Far away it is from Him! Rather, He wants this poor servant to willingly seek his Lord, for there is no good except that it is with Him, nor is there any honor except in seeking Him. Once he seeks Allah, He, too, will seek him.

Once he seeks Him, He will treat him with His kindness and generosity and be his guide whenever he contemplates, moves, settles, sleeps, remains awake, with the Pleasure of His Lord according to His generosity, open-handedness and blessings.

Imam al-Baqir (‘a) has said, ‘Allah revealed to David (‘a) to

Inform your people that no servant among them whom I command, so he gives Me,’ except that it becomes incumbent upon Me to listen to his wish, to assist him in obeying Me. When he asks me, I grant him; when he calls upon Me, I answer him; when he seeks refuge with Me, I grant him refuge; when he pleads to Me to give him sufficiently, I grant him till he is satisfied; when he relies on Me, I protect him from wherever he is vulnerable even

p: ۳۲

.(if all My beings conspire against him.' (Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah, p. ۷۴

Such is the sign of His extreme compassion and spacious mercy: He goes to extremes in warning His poor servant against going where he has no business, let alone where he is harmed. The following is excerpted from one of the Qudsi addresses cited from p. ۶۶ of Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah:

'O son of Adam! If you find cruelty in your heart, an ailment in your body, a decrease in your wealth, a deprivation in your sustenance, you should then know that you spoke about what does not concern you.'

This is a reference to unnecessary talk, let alone prohibitive one, for the latter is more dangerous than poison, for poison affects one's body, while unnecessary talk causes one's heart to be hard, decreases one's wealth, deprives him of his sustenance in addition to harming his body. How, then, can the Compassionate God accept that one should thus expose himself to such great perdition? Rather, it is narrated that Allah, Glory belongs to Him, holds His servant accountable for looking at what does not concern him (just as He holds him accountable for talking about what is none of his business. (۱)

Because He does not want to let His poor and miserable servant waste one of the looks which he casts, He made looking at the face of a scholar a norm of adoration, looking at the Ka`bah as a form of adoration, and looking at what Allah has created in order to

p: ۳۳

۱- Such is the requirement of precise surveillance of one's conduct in its highest degrees, for what the eyes see is regarded by most people as something which does not require accountability, since the eye sees so long as it is not shut, whether one wants it or not. But

one who watches himself turns this involuntary operation into a voluntary one. He, therefore, will not look at what he is not supposed to, let alone what he is prohibited from looking at. Through this hadith and its likes, it becomes quite clear that the path to Allah, Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim, is sharper than the sword’s edge. This is why it is hard to reach the destination except if Allah grants His favor and mercy.

gain admonishment as a form of adoration, for an hour of such contemplation is :equivalent [with Allah] to sixty years of adoration

Wherever you turn, God's presence is there. God is all-Pervading, all-Knowing.' (Qur'an,' .(۲:۱۱۵

Imam al-Sadiq ('a), Ja`far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ('a), quotes his forefathers citing the ,Prophet ('s) saying

Allah revealed to Prophet David saying: 'O David! Just like the sun which can shade quite' many, My mercy is never too straitened for anyone who seeks it. And just like pessimism does not harm anyone who is not a pessimist, those who are pessimist cannot save .(themselves from dissension.' (Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah, p. ۷۷

This divine Qudsi address is one of the greatest testimonies to our argument that a pessimist who thinks ill of his Lord cannot save himself from dissension, so he falls into perdition. And anyone who is not a pessimist, on account of thinking well of his Lord, cannot be harmed by the things held with pessimism; their evil is warded off through his .own good thoughts of Allah

Anyone who seeks the mercy of Allah by studying the path of Ahl al-Bayt ('a)(۱), and who follows in their footsteps, can never see their paths as too narrow. Rather, they are still expanding. The gates, one of each opens to a thousand other gates, keep opening for him till he reaches the station which brings him happiness through the noor of learning and ,knowledge, something with which Allah praised His Prophet ('s) when He said

Have We not expanded your'

p: ۳۴

The expression of the compiler here is quite magnificent. On one hand, he has made -۱ the study of their path rewardable with the Divine mercy. The very inclination to know about them and to feel comfortable with the signs of their competition with each other in doing good is an indication of one’s readiness to receive blessings from them. Otherwise, souls that are strange to each other do not feel comfortable with statements such as these about those who communicated with the world of ghayb. On the other hand, he stressed the necessity to stay in touch with them, for how can anyone be guided to the greatest of Allah’s Paths unless he absorbs the truth about the Divine wilaya represented in the Prophet (‘s) and his wasis (‘a)?! How can such souls, which never comprehended even the most obvious facts in the world of knowledge, for nothing has received more attention than the wilaya (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. ۱۸), comprehend the particularities of treading ?!the path leading to the Lord of lords

.(breast for you?' (Qur'an, ۹۴:۱

If Allah blesses him with reaching such a station, he will be one of those who will not be harmed by this life's afflictions, nor by the afflictions of the Hereafter. In other words, if any kind of affliction befalls him, he does not regard it as an affliction, as people do; rather, he considers it as one of the means which enable him to attain the Pleasure of .Allah

According to the lofty stations with Allah Almighty which he seeks, he enjoys the greatest refuge and the most pleasing of rewards. This is why some of the attributes of al-Husain ('a), which were shared by his fellows at the [battle of] Taff, is that whenever affliction intensified, the glow of their faces increased in intensity, and they became more optimistic. May Allah grant us and yourself such stations. How can the kings' sons ever !enjoy such pleasures?! Suffices us Allah, and how Great His help is and His support

Chapter ۵: Man is Weak

O Brother who is too indifferent to reform himself, ignorant of his own reality! You, poor :soul, have two facets and considerations

One of them concerns your own self, you as you are. To this facet have both your vision and observation been absent. From this facet, you are a diminishing and perishing person !of no value or worth; nobody is concerned about you; you are nothing

As for your other facet, you are tied to the Divine might; you are the manifestation of the Greatness of

p: ۳۵

the Lord; you are a creature made by this Great Creator, the most Exalted One, the most Great. From this facet, you are tied to all the world starting from the `Arsh and ending with the earth, from the seventh high heavens to the seventh lowest earth, in addition to .what is between the east and the west and all parts of the earth

So, if you are good to your own soul, you do well to the whole world and vice versa(۱). If this confuses you, there is a likeness for you under the `Arsh which does similarly to what you do. If you do something ugly, Allah puts a shield on your likeness lest you should be scandalized by those around the `Arsh. And if you do something good, Allah manifests it :for them. This is the meaning of this statement

O One Who manifests what is beautiful and covers what is ugly' reported by our mentor,' al-Bahai, in his Muftah where he quotes Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying, 'Each and every believer has a likeness in the `Arsh. If he is busy bowing, prostrating and the like, his likeness does the same. It is then that the angels see him, pray and seek forgiveness for him. And if the servant is busy committing an act of disobedience, Allah lowers down a .(curtain on his likeness so that the angels may not see it.' (Muftih al-Falah, p. ۱۵۶

Also, there is no doubt that your daily deeds, every morning and evening, are

p: ۳۶

This statement, despite its brevity, reveals the secret of the truth about the impact of -۱ some righteous servants of Allah on certain matters and with the permission of Allah Almighty. This cannot be denied due to its quite frequent occurrence and to the transmitted incidents in the past and in the present in its regard. If a servant of Allah is loved by his Master, all the affairs of such a servant will be dear to Him, including his wishes and pleas. Allah Almighty, because of the intensity of His love for him, makes His Divine will in agreement with the will of such a servant of His which necessitates a positive response, barring obstacles. It is from here that Allah Almighty has permitted the bringing

of the dead to life, a most unusual thing, attributed to Christ with His own permission. This is the equation which removes the amazement about super-natural events in all .accurately reported incidents

displayed before the Prophet (‘s) and before the Imams (‘a), especially the Imam of the Time (‘a), may Allah hasten his reappearance, who is Waliyy al-Amr. Anything good in these deeds pleases them, so much so that one of them has said, ‘By Allah! The Messenger of Allah (‘a) is more pleased when a believer does his brother a favor than the one in need of the favor’ (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. ۱۵۶).

There is no doubt that the Prophet (‘s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are the pillars and the corners of the world while the whole world, including the angels and others, are their subjects. Whoever pleases the sultan of the world pleases all the subjects on account of pleasing the sultan and the sultanate, so the whole world supplicates to such a benevolent servant saying, ‘May Allah please you just as you pleased us!’

And if he commits a wrongdoing, he displeases the Prophet (‘s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a); therefore, the trees will dry, the fruits will spoil, the rain will stop falling and prices will keep rising.

So, O wretch! The impact of your act of obedience or disobedience on the whole world has become clear to you, in addition particularly to the angels assigned for you. Add to this what we have already pointed out above regarding the effect of obedience and disobedience on one’s offspring and on the offspring of the offspring, and so on.

Contrariwise, the benefit encompasses all the bygone believers as well

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as those still living who recite this supplication: 'Lord! Forgive the believing men and women,' so much so that it has been reported that all the believing men and women intercede for the person who thus supplicates and say, 'This is the one who used to seek .(forgiveness for us!' (Al-Wasa'il, Vol. ۴, p. ۱۵۱

It is reported that everyone in the heavens and on earth seeks forgiveness for the scholar, including the fish in the ocean (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۱, p. ۳۴). The most Praised One has ,said

Those who bear the throne (of Allah) and those near to Him glorify and praise their Lord.' .(They believe in Him and implore His forgiveness for those who believe' (Qur'an, ۴۰:۷

It is well known that if one is a famous mujtahid, those in the east and in the west benefit from emulating him, finding his books and compilations useful, and so are his means of .guiding them when alive and even after his demise

Thus, it becomes clear to you how you can bear an impact on the whole world from the second facet in you, from your being tied to the Holy One, the manifestation of His Greatness; so, how do you justify, O wretch, your indifference and lack of concern when ?!you turn to the other facet whereby you are nothing at all

Surely our master, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), has said the truth when he said :((the following verses of poetry

;Your remedy is within you, though you do not see it

And

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:your ailment is from you, though you do not feel it

,Do you think you are but a small heavenly body

?!While in you the Greatest World unfolds

,And you are the clear book which

(Through its signs, what is hidden is revealed. (Diwan Amir al-Mu'minin ['a], p. ۱۷۵

,If you neglect yourself, your Lord does not neglect you; Allah Almighty has said

.(Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled (without a purpose)? (Qur'an, ۷۵:۳۶'

Wake up, then, from your indifference, and pay attention to the second facet whereby you become a human being; thus did your Lord call upon you to do. If you regard yourself among the wretched folks, being distant from any chance for happiness, be informed, poor soul, that Allah effaces whatever He pleases and so does He fix, and with Him is the .Mother Book

Beware lest you should be a devil in a human form. Be informed that if you choose this for yourself, you will have lost the opportunity of earning the Divine Care, corrupted the whole world on account of your own corruption, cast grief in the hearts of the prophets and the messengers, the angels near to Allah and all those in the heavens and on earth. The earth complains from your walking on its surface, and the heavens complains from .shading you

It has been reported that the earth complains to Allah for forty mornings about one who is not circumcised and who urinates on it (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۱۰۱, p. ۱۱۰), one of the deeds

p: ٣٩

?!held in contempt; so, what is wrong with you

As a whole, you, O wretch, become an enemy of Allah. All those who live in the domain of Allah are your foes(١). They seek permission to have their revenge against you. So, how can you have the might that can withstand them all, the insignificant weakling that you are? Who will shelter you if you duel with Him and fight Him?! Surely there is no escape :route for you except one leading to Him

.(Then hasten (at once) to Allah: I am a plain warner to you from Him!' (Qur'an, ٥١:٥٠'

Anyone who is afraid of anyone flees away from the latter except one who is afraid of Allah: he flees to Him. If you flee to Him, the most Exalted and Great that He is, listen to what Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has narrated from his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ('a) ,who quotes Allah Almighty saying

Whenever I look at the heart of one of My servants and come to see how he loves to be' sincere in his obedience to Me, seeking My Pleasure, I undertake to reform him and to .(guide him.' (Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah, p. ١٣٣

,The Prophet ('s) has quoted Allah Almighty as saying

Once I come to know that My servant is concerned about Me, I direct his desire to ask Me' and to plead to Me. If My servant is as such, and if he inclines to be off-guard, I stop him from losing his guard. Such are My true

This, indeed, is a frightening fact and is not the childbirth of one’s imagination. – ۱ Everything in existence, with the exception of mankind, is by nature subservient to Allah. It is well known that one who becomes the exception from the movement of obedience is an enemy of the Lord of the Worlds Whose army is made up of the hosts of the heavens and of the earth. Are not the hosts there to do anything but follow the orders of their Commander?! Thereupon, if the disobedient ones remain in safety and security, it is so due to the interference of the Compassionate Lord Who stops His hosts from seeking revenge against His foes. The fire of Hell and how it encircles the unbelievers is nothing but a manifestation of the Lord’s hosts, for He has permitted this fire to seek revenge, hence it inquires: ‘Are there any more (to torment)?’

servants. Such are the true heroes, those who, if I want to penalize all the residents of the earth, I spare them all the penalty for the sake of such heroes.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۹۰, p. .(۱۶۲

Look carefully into this tradition and see how it concludes with Allah sparing all the people of the earth from the penalty and the perdition only because of the presence of such servants of His. Their mere presence is a blessing to the whole world. It safeguards .everyone from annihilation

As a whole, everything in this world is interconnected with each other, and it is like the one individual: If pain afflicts one of his parts, all other parts will feel the pain as well. If the same pain is removed from that single part, the pain will be removed from all the .others

One hadith states that if a servant praises Allah, he will be included in the supplication of ,all other participants in the congregational prayer service because the latter say

.(Allah listens to those who praise Him.' (Al-Wasa'il, Vol. ۴, p. ۲'

So look and see how such a servant is connected to all others in the world who pray: Their supplication includes him in theirs by virtue of one single statement... Likewise, if one does something good, and if he does it well, he will be included in the supplication of the ,Prophet ('s) who has said

May Allah have mercy on one who does something and does it well.' (Kanz al-`Ummal, p.' .(۹۱۲۸

There is

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no doubt that the supplication of the Prophet (‘s) is answered, and one who is included in .the mercy of Allah (‘a) is saved from perdition

There are some in our time who wish they had lived during the time of the Prophet (‘s) so that, perhaps, they could have been included in one of his supplications, imagining that .such an opportunity had passed and cannot be compensated

This assumption is wrong. Their being included in the supplication of the Prophet (‘s), and such a supplication reaching them in our time, is quite easy: Just as we said, if one does something well, he will be included in the Prophet’s supplication for mercy. And if one fasts one day during the month of Sha`ban, for example, he, too, becomes included in the ,supplication of the Prophet (‘s) wherein he says

Sha`ban is my month; may Allah have mercy on anyone who assists me to undertake my’ .(month.’ (Al-Wasa’il, Vol. ١٠, p. ۴٩٢

The Prophet (‘s) is far from depriving the people of this time of the blessings of his honorable supplication. Rather, he has made many honorable supplications for many different occasions. Whoever wishes to include himself in any of such supplications, he will then be included in such a supplication which is sure to be answered [upon his .[recitation thereof

Look at yourself, Brother, and see how he has touched you with his mercy by including you under such honorable supplications which paved for you the path to be included in them. When

you are indifferent and absent-minded, you wish to include yourself under foul titles; the whole world will then supplicate against you. Anyone who causes a believer to grieve actually grieves the Messenger of Allah ('a), then Ali, ('a) then al-Hasan ('a), then al-Husain ('a), then the rest of the Imams ('a), then the whole world, causing the world to :shout against him in one voice

.(May Allah cause you to grieve just as you grieved us!' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۱, p. ۹۰'

So, Brother, you are very important, very significant, and you are between two of your facets in all your conditions and circumstances: You may either seek Allah or turn away from Him(۱). If you turn to Him, He will turn to you, too. And if you turn away from Him, He, too, will turn away from you. As a result, everything else will turn away from you as well. .You are helplessly positioned between this and that

O One Who turns to those who turn to Him, granting them His kindness out of His favor! We plead to You to grant us success to acquire what obligates Your continuous turning to us! Do cultivate our conduct, O most Merciful One of all those who are merciful! And Allah surely blesses Muhammad ('s), the best of His creation, and blesses his righteous and .(purified Progeny ('a

Chapter ۶: What Path Should God's Servants Take to Reach Their Lord

Be informed that anything big dwarves when compared to something bigger. Anything hard dwarves when compared with something harder. It diminishes and disappears, becoming nothing. One

This meaning is one of those, if absorbed by a servant as it should be, which can cause -١ a radical change in one's life. The soul may entice one to procrastinate because the Divine torment in the Hereafter is put off, but how can one ignore it when the Almighty turns away from him at the time when he commits an act of disobedience? Our Imam, al-Sajjsd ('a), said the following to his wife when her son fell into a well while the Imam ('a) was absorbed in his prayers, 'If I turn away from Him, He will turn away from me; so, who do you think has more mercy on His slave than Him?.' (Dal'ail al-Imamah, p. ١٩٨). This is an obvious fact for particular people, that is, a servant suffers a pain greater than anything .physical when his Lord turns away from him

who is pricked by a thorn then bitten by a scorpion sees the thorn as nothing compared with the sting of the scorpion, something not worth mentioning at all. The Creator, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, has subdued everything by creating something else higher .than it

Take a look at the greatness of the Commander of the Faithful ('a), his might and prowess, his attainment of the extreme limit of perfection, and how he humbles himself when the name of Muhammad ('s) is mentioned, admitting that he is his slave. Says the ,(Imam ('a

.(I am one of the slaves of Muhammad ('s)' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۱, p. ۸۹'

Such is the tangible principle about everything possible or in existence. So, if you want to think less of the life of this world and its hardships, take a look at what is harder. Imagine if you add to your hardship another hardship much harder for you; what would you then do? It is then that everything becomes easy when compared to what is harder. And it is then that you will count your blessings and say, 'Praise be to Allah Who did not expose me '.to a hardship! Had He so willed, He would have done just that

Likewise, if you wish to appreciate a good deed which you have done so as to rid yourself of the elation, which is the substance of conceit and bragging, compare this good deed with others undertaken by those who are higher in status, those who are

better than you. Or suppose you are elevated in your status; you will then see such a good deed as wrong and as indicative of your shortcoming, so you need to apologize for it. You will feel ashamed of being associated with it, let alone being proud of and elated .about it

If you become accustomed to such a habit, by the will of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Exalted One, you should incessantly keep seeking Allah, for there is no goal nor an end greater than loving Him: Whenever you ascend the ladder of being sincere in serving Him, you will see a higher, a more magnificent, a more bright and a more sublime .station(۱). So, if you wish to reach the end, there is none to reach, none to stop at

But if you want to stop without any obstacle in your way to continue your ascendance, this is something which does not suit you. It is so because the most Glorious One, Praise is all due to Him, invites you with His munificence and generosity to get even closer to Him. Who else would you prefer over Him?! For what gain would you turn away from Him?! Lord! Whoever seeks anyone but You shall meet disappointment, and whoever wants to !turn away from You shall be a loser

Since it has become rationally accurate that there is no alternative for seeking a path to Allah through incessant obedience to Him, be then informed that you can achieve this

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۱ - Feeling aware of the Divine manifestations, which are the most significant boons in existence, boons which help one along his march, a servant increases in his passion to what is greater and more beautiful whenever the veil is removed from his eyes, for there is no repetition in such a process of manifestation. Eeach manifestation from the One Who knows the unknown has its specific magnificence and attraction which make it different from its precedent. This is why the friends of Allah who enjoy the pleasure of manifestations can hardly encounter any hardship in life despite its bitterness: the pleasure of reaching their station makes them forget the pain of any separation even

.when all the people of the earth consider such separation as something quite grave

by seeking another facet of obedience to Him if you stop observing another facet: Allah, the Praised One, loves to be asked for permission just as He loves those who uphold His commandments. One who seeks to win the love of Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, Allah shall open this gate for him and make its undertaking sound and hopeful adoration as means to attain His love, the most Exalted and the most Great that He is, for .it is just so

Also, the same takes place if he abandons them at a station where he fears lest boredom and lack of attachment should hinder him from such an obedience, as is the human nature. He will then be excused by Allah Who loves to be sought to grant permission. His abandonment of such a station will then earn him the love of the most Exalted and the most Great One even if one does not thus expect. A servant of Allah will then be subject to His love, the most Exalted and the most Great that He is, in whatever he does or does not .do. Such is the great success, and for this should the doers of good strive

A testimonial to such a meaning is a narrative variably reported from the Commander of the Faithful ('a) and from our master, al-Hasan son of Ali ('a). The Commander of the ,Faithful ('a) is quoted as having said

,When two options, both pleasing Allah, are offered to a person'

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‘.he [the good believer] should opt to undertake the one which is harder for him

Imam al-Hasan (‘a), however, says that such a believer will opt for the one easier to .undertake

The second view is interpreted by arguing that Allah loves to be sought for permission just as He loves His servants to observe His commandments, and He loves moderation in one’s form of adoration. It also falls under the category of those who say that

The creed is strong; so, you should delve into it gently, and do not force Allah’s servants’ (to obey Allah’ (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٧٠

and under the category of self-deception by attracting the soul to obey Allah. The first, too, gives the impression that it falls under the category of resisting one’s temptation which is the key to all blessings(١). Both admonish the servants of Allah and guide His creation. Hence, their status in the hearts cannot be realized by the minds or by the .dreams, and they know it best

Also, one must take the time to contemplate upon his actions so that he may perform them in the best way. This will be prompted by sincerity. This often requires some time, although anything you postpone is subject to Satan’s coveting, and postponement .incorporates detriments including missing an opportunity

So, if you see both these issues as contradicting each other, since through postponement you are apprehensive of missing the opportunity, while with haste you are apprehensive of spoiling the task which needs taking the time to

p: ۴۷

The compiler's expression 'going against one's inclinations is the key to all blessings' is -۱ not exaggerated. One of the principles of the path to Allah Almighty, a principle which never falters, is the impossibility of undertaking such a journey without self-control, for how can anyone other than the animal's owner control the animal's path? The first step in the movement, therefore, is to accustom one's human existence, in all its parts and senses, to one's will. It is well known that this stage can be regarded as crossing half the distance: Inclination, desire and fantasy are all among the doors which drag a servant of Allah to the bottomless pit no matter how serious such a servant is in making the entire distance. The matter is not accomplished through belief, conviction in addition to hopes. Imam al-Kazim ('a), hence, says the following: 'I have come to know that the best of provisions of one who seeks You is a determined will whereby he prefers You; it is .(through the strength of will that my heart has addressed You.' (Al-Iqbal, Vol. ۳, p. ۲۷۷

contemplate on and to perform. Add to this the deception of Satan the Accused who tries to present it to you as an act of obedience while it is in reality for the satisfaction of one's .own desire, and to please Satan, so it will be a form of transgression

The way to get rid of such a contradiction is that you ought to know whether the postponement will be an opportunity for Satan. If so, such a postponement is indicative of one's ineffectiveness and laziness. It is out of love for wealth. It should remain in your hand: you will not spend it, for then it will get out of your hand. Such a postponement is the one that is detrimental to the scholar, and there is no doubt about its ugliness. The .self (nafs) must be fought and outsmarted so that the soul may save itself

As regarding postponing the doing of something for the sake of taking the time to achieve its perfection, it is desired, liked and mandated by the Lord of Dignity. It is not to be followed by regret, nor does it cause missing an opportunity to do something good because you are thus a man of righteousness when you assess the issues properly: 'There can be no grounds (for complaint) against those who do what is right...' (Qur'an, (٩:٩١).(١)

Nevertheless, if you wish to do something with precision and perfection, accompany your postponement of doing it with reliance on Allah, praying He will enable you

p: ٤٨

١- Getting to know the right timing for proceeding to do something or withholding doing it needs, in reality, a foresight and assistance from Allah Almighty. Quite often, we lose the opportunity to earn great benefits because we do not watch for the opportunity which passes away like a summer cloud. Harvesting fruits on time is the concern of anyone who treads the path. What a loss it is when the farmer wakes up after the harvest season or ?!when what is to be harvested has already withered

to accomplish doing it when you actually undertake it. When you are dragged by laziness and the desire to postpone doing it, make advancing it accompanied by reliance on Allah to assist you to be sincere in such an undertaking and to accomplish it in a way that .pleases Him and earns His Pleasure

If you accompany the matter with reliance on Allah whether you postpone or advance its doing, exerting an effort to identify the motive in each case, if your concern is prompted by a selfish reason or by laziness, desiring to keep what is already in your hand, you will .not be deputed [by the Almighty] for such a bad undertaking

But if the motive for either advancement or postponement is a sound one which it requires, you will be doing what is right whether you advanced or postponed doing it, and you are not to blame; you will earn the love of Allah in either advancement or postponement case, just as we have already told you that you will earn the love of Allah if you did or did not do it. If a servant of Allah earns the love of Allah when he does or does not do something, or when he advances or postpones doing it, he will have accomplished his march towards Allah by continuously treading the path of obeying Him. Far, far away it (is from Him to shun one who seeks Him and who knocks at His door.(١

Do not ever be misled

p: ۴۹

This statement, though brief, is very precise. He combines earning the love of Allah, the -١ basis of the divine attraction to the servant of Allah, with the practical conduct while doing what is obligatory and avoiding what is prohibitive. Some people erroneously think that demonstrating such love without actions earns a servant of Allah degrees of nearness to Allah. So you find them aimlessly soaring spiritually, employing poetry once and once prose just to return from their soaring to their living reality which contains what brings .about the wrath of the Lord on account of their individual, social or family dealings

into thinking that the hearts' path to Allah is confined to prayers, fasting, the recitation of the Qur'an, learning, educating, the recitation of supplications, the performing of ziyaras, and the like, so much so that they consider anything other than such pronouncements as 'idle talk' and 'a waste of time' as thought by our 'righteous' brothers. This is nothing but (short-sightedness and some people being confused.(۱

Be informed that the essential requirement of the legislator with regard to mature people is to be strong in foresight so that they may obey their Lord with their full foresight and ample knowledge. Anything that has anything to do with strengthening foresight and increasing awareness is included in the legislator's objective and is expected of him. .Actually, he more than anyone else seeks and underscores this

Anyone who restricts himself to the rituals mentioned above, eying them in such a limited way, stagnation will make the most of him. His awareness of the subjects of the Shari`ah, of the Qiblah, of time, etc., will decrease. Anyone who wishes to deceive him with regard to his creed, be he a human or a jinn, can do so. This is the opposite of what is sought by .the person responsible for the Shari`ah, and it runs contrarily to his goal

This is the opposite of one who buys and sells, learns ethics, debates, the commendable manners relevant to making a question or answering one, in addition to his own manifestations of adoration, supplications, knowledge and teaching..., such

p: ۵۰

۱- This is one gate that opens many gates of knowledge and insight in seeking a way to please Allah Almighty. We find some people summarizing such a path in a number of thikrs and certain sections of the Qur'an (wirds), forgetting that a creed is not merely talk. A creed, rather, is based on knowledge and treatment which prompt the saying of what agrees with the Shari`ah. Quite often, being occupied with wirds (in a way not followed by Ahl al-Bayt ['a]) causes the intoxication of one's subconsciousness, so he thinks he is doing great while he is not doing anything. Add to this the fact that the reality of a

supplication is the movement which stems from the heart and which is prompted by the meanings of what is articulated. The articulated supplication is nothing but the manifestation of its hidden meanings. If a pronouncement is empty of prompting the meanings suitable for them, what is revealed ought not be revealed... And what is the ?value of a structure which has no content

a man is truly a man, a very good man; one's conscience is the best testimony for all of .that

Just as you carefully looked into learning some tangible crafts, Allah opened gates for you on the knowledge of what makes sense. The essence in this is that Allah, the Praised One, connected what is tangible to what is rational, the matters of the Hereafter with those of .this life

So, one who seeks what is in the Hereafter without employing what is available in the life of this world will never achieve his objective: Allah has made the Hereafter issues attainable only with what is available in this life, making the life that is intended to attain the Hereafter as part of the Hereafter, something which is not to be condemned among :the things relevant to this life. One hadith states the following

Condemned is one who abandons his Hereafter for the sake of his life in this world, and' '.condemned is one who abandons his life in this world for the sake of the Hereafter

The life the abandonment of which for the sake of the Hreafter is condemned is actually the one that leads one to the good things in the Hereafter, and it is the one that does not stand in the way of anything good. The first type of 'dunya' cannot be avoided to reach the goal, and it is mandatory. Discussing it, therefore, is considered useful for one's awareness. Such a discussion strengthens one's understanding and foresight, a

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meaning embedded in the traditions relevant to trade. (Most references state that it contributes to reason as stated on p. ١۴٨, Vol. ۵, of Al-Kafi.)

It has also been reported in hadith that adoration is comprised of ten parts: nine about trade and one about all acts of obedience (to Allah). What supports this argument is the fact that the Prophet ('s), prior to the inception of his mission, took to trade, and so did other prophets and messengers(١). The divine wisdom decreed that such perfections be scattered worldwide and that many of them are currently being discussed by people so that everyone may get his share thereof. This is why He has commanded that the wise word must be accepted no matter who articulates it, so much so that Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have said,

'Take wisdom even from the people of hypocrisy'

according to Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٢, p. ٩٩. They ('a) have also said,

'Learn from the mouths of men'

as we read on p. ١٠۵, Vol. ٢, of Bihar al-Anwar. When the Wise Legislator wanted His servant to earn an ample share of pieces of wisdom and branches of knowledge, He disseminated them throughout the world so that they could be accessible to them, ordering them to accept such pieces of wisdom from whoever brought them. Ahl al-Bayt ('a) required their Shi`ah to get to know people through their righteousness rather than righteousness through people. Their Imams ('a) have said,

'Look into what one says, and do not look into who said what'

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۱- Such is the condition of incorporating all fields in the requirements of worship. Inclusion of acting upon the Shari`ah is one of the characteristics of one who truly seeks a path to his Lord, unlike one who wishes to fly with one wing, let alone one who wishes to fly with one single feather! What is tested by reason is that the defect caused by falling short of one’s effort to secure livelihood is the result of one’s distraction to many things rather than the concentration on one. A path seeker, more than anyone else, needs to shun such a distraction and any multitude of burdens in his life. Anything vacant is like a rope heavily tying a servant of Allah down to earth. All this excludes what such a servant may have to undergo of pure fate and destiny. He will be rewarded for it, even if it forces him to be distracted. Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great One, helps His servant achieve that from which he is distracted and compensates him [for his loss] with what such a servant can never imagine.

.(Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ١, p. ٣٥٥)

,They ('a) have also said

Two things are unusual: a word of wisdom coming from a shallow-minded person, a' word which you have to accept, and shallow-mindedness from a wise person which you 'have to forgive

.according to Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٢, p. ۴۴

Perfection, then, all perfection, is absorbing statements and actions, or they may be ,dealings, experiences, etc. Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are cited as having said

Reason is the storehouse of experiences, and the best experience is that which teaches' 'you a lesson

according to Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٧۴, p. ٢٠٨, and that an experience is knowledge earned, according to Ghurar al-Hikam. Anything sparked inside a number of brethren, so they restricted themselves to following the well known rituals, limiting their outlook only to them, is something which we have put to the test. We looked into the past conditions of previous generations, those whose tales reached us, and we found the above to be an indication of a limited mentality, a lack in awareness, something which does not elevate .anyone, nor does it help one reach lofty stations

We, therefore, would like to attract one's attention to the fact that it is one of the deceptions of Satan the Accursed which the latter uses to confine one from moving to

lofty stations and coveted plateaus. What makes a thing easier compared with something else is to look at life in this world and at its affairs to see how insignificant these are compared with the

p: ۵۳

.matters of the Hereafter, circumstances and development stages

One who seeks Allah has to get the worries relevant to this life out of his mind, so he is not excited about anything which he achieves, nor is he grieved by anything which he loses. He simply contemplates on these issues, looking into how fast they will disappear, how swiftly they will alter, how they will never remain the same. A wise person ought not be !too concerned about something which is so unstable, something which in fact is… nothing

Secondly, if we look at life in this world as 'something' this is what Satan the Accursed insinuates, Satan who has deceived this creation, making people believe that life by itself is something good. But there is no doubt, and by way of necessity, it cannot be compared with the pleasures of the Hereafter which are much better than its pleasures and which .Allah has in store for His obedient servants, selecting them from among all others

If we suppose that life has something good, this 'something good' diminishes when compared to the good things of the Hereafter. If you prolong your look and carefully contemplate, it will become quite clear to you that one who pays his full attention to the issues of this life as it is, not in order to thereby reach the good things of the Hereafter, .(will be paying attention to mere nothingness, to a vanishing falsehood(۱

(So, our dear Brother! Be informed that the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a

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۱ - Paying attention to the fact that life is temporal and will terminate is one of the important reasons why one should not set his heart on it. What is contemptible is loving its pleasures; otherwise, life itself cannot be described as beautiful or ugly. Since Allah Almighty is the One Who beautifies it, nobody has the right to speak ill of it. How can one

do so since Allah Almighty rebukes anyone who prohibits the enjoyment of its good things? But if the one who beautifies it is Satan, mankind then ought to be cautious in its regard just as he may be of a snake: It is soft when touched, while inside her is the deadly venom. It is necessary to overcome one's deception in this regard. Nurture your soul with the hope for a much greater reward and a much lasting one so that you may not be distracted by what is little and vanishing. Imam Ali ('a) is quoted as having said, 'Had life in this world been filled with gold while the Hereafter is filled with baked clay, I would have opted for the baked clay of the Hereafter in preference over the gold of this life because such a clay lasts forever, whereas life's gold is temporal.' So, what if the gold of the Hereafter is everlasting while the clay of this life vanishes? (Shajarat Tuba, Vol. ٢, p. ۴٢٢).

is not 'a thing' by itself. If you look at it as a 'thing', wishing to leave it for something better, you are not guided at all to the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a)..., period. Gather your thoughts, then, and supplicate to your Lord to help you get to know what life is according to Ahl al-Bayt ('a) so that you may be among those who follow in their footsteps and adhere to their method; otherwise, we will be in a valley while our critics will be in .another

If some sound vision, a fixed and commendable way of thinking that life is not to be sought for what it is, nor should it be one's ultimate objective..., becomes available to you, you will then have no choice except to confine your objective and inclination to what is .rendered to Allah, to what Allah is sought for

If it so happens that you will after that do something not for the sake of Allah, praise to Him, but to go along with your own nature, out of your own inclination, or because of the deception of Satan the Accursed, this is something which you did not intend to do in the first place, nor does it fall under your own will and determination. Rather, it is much like an unintentional slip of the tongue. You will still, despite this, have the right to state the :'following in the 'inclusive ziyarah

'.[(obedient to you [to Ahl al-Bayt ('a ...'

This is so because in

the case of intention to do or not to do something, you obey none but them ('a). You see none others from among their foes as being worthy of your obedience except when you are deceived, or when you flee away or become unmindful. You will only then make a mistake and do something unintentionally, something contrary to your objective. You will then sincerely repent, truly seek forgiveness, for you always are determined not to fall into sinning again but to continue on your course of obedience(١). Do not include yourself :among those to whom the following tradition hints

One who keeps committing the same sin while still seeking forgiveness is like one who' .(ridicules his Lord' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٩٠, p. ٢٨١

You will then be excluded from those thus labelled. It is as though this same meaning was :hinted at by the Master of Martyrs ('a) in his `Arafa supplication thus

Lord! You know that although my obedience to You has not been continuously positive,' yet it has continued in the form of love for You and determination to seek You' (Iqbal al- .(A`mal, p. ٣٤٨

All of this hinges on the love for the life in this world exiting from one's heart even in the meaning which we have just stated, that is, your decision and determination are bound on not doing any worldly deed in order to thereby seek this dunya as your ultimate goal. ,Such is not sought by any wise person, so much so that if you do so

p: ۵۶

This is one of the realistic portraits painted by the author as he outlines his ethical path. -١ A slippage resulting from unmindfulness or unawareness ought not instill despondency in the heart of one who seeks Allah. By nature, one's heart quite often fluctuates, and Allah

Almighty loves those who often return to Him just as He loves those who seek to purify themselves. Some traditions have made a similitude between a believer (mu'min) and an ear of grain which keeps falling then straightening itself. People of knowledge are fully aware of the fact that the complementing movement of a servant of Allah, following each time he returns to Allah and repents, may intensify in order to make a reason for being compensated for the stages during which he lost on account of unmindfulness or .submission to desire

you will look at yourself as having joined the company of the unwise and left the wise .behind you

If you master this to the extent that you start with it whenever you contemplate upon doing something, yours will be the objective which we have stated as well as others .similar to its gist; so, take advantage of it, and do not be among the unmindful

?Chapter ۷: How do we Tread the Path to Allah

Be informed that one who seeks the Path of Allah, who aims at achieving what is with Allah, has to observe certain matters so that he may reach his destination. The Guides to this Path, who are the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), have guided us to certain matters which will facilitate the achievement of this goal when one becomes familiar with them; otherwise, .he will not reach his destination; he will go back on his heels and retreat

First: One must be aware of the fact that everything good is with Allah; so, he must not seek it from anyone else, nor should he seek anything but such goodness. If you befriend everyone and initiate your friendly ties with people, let this be out of your desire to seek what is with Allah, hoping to please Allah by making your concern to be good to them, to be of benefit to them. People are the dependents of Allah. The one who is loved the most by Allah is that who is the most beneficial to His dependents (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. ۱۳۱), as we are

.(told by Ahl al-Bayt ('a)(۱

If you seek the sublime status [with Allah] by becoming the one who is loved by Allah the most, according to the sacred hadith, you have first and foremost to be fully aware of this: Be informed that the benefit which you derive from people [to whom you have done favors] is much greater than any favor you have bestowed upon them. It is because of them that you were able to reach a status of being the most loved by Allah; so, do not ask them for any benefit other than this, and do not look at anything else, for there is no other .town beyond Abbadan

If the goal of your befriending them is to be of benefit to them, and when your favors reach them, set your mind upon accepting their ill treatment and do not deal with them likewise, for this is the very first of your favors on them. Furthermore, if you set your mind on abstention of rewarding an evil doer with a similar measure, do not be satisfied with just this. You wish to emulate Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and their method of being benevolent even .to those who mistreated them

They forgave those who treated them with injustice, visited those who severed their ties from them and gave those who deprived them. You, then, have to set your mind on wishing that one of them would mistreat you so that you would be benevolent to him, so that through

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Such a meaning may be absent from the minds of many people, including the elite - ۱ among them. When they bestow favors upon people, they undergo an unaware state of feeling that people owe them for such favors, and this becomes clear when their tongues slip and eyes wander around. The meaning mentioned by the author is one of the requirements of a deep comprehension of the right of Allah Almighty and of the right of those [saints] connection with whom Allah has mandated. It is also one of the requirements of a precise supervision of what goes on inside people's minds. A heart can never be a station for the angelic noors unless it gets rid of such hidden impurities which are regarded as sins by those who are close to Allah even if they appear to look good to

.the virtuous

him will you earn the virtue of being good to those who treat you badly. It is then that you emulate the Prophet (‘s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), for such is their attitude. Our master, the ,Commander of the Faithful (‘a), has said

One who is the most loved by Allah is the one who emulates His Prophet (‘s)’ (Nahjul-’ .(Balagha, sermon ۱۶۰

When you reward his mistreatment of you by being benevolent to him, you first earn such a lofty station. Then, despite your poverty, want and need, if you reward a wrong-doer with benevolence, Allah, the Praised and the most Exalted One, through His generosity and plentitude, is more apt to reward you when you respond to a bad deed with a good .one. You will then, secondly, have won the proof of being worthy of His generosity

He, Praise to Him, ordered you to be benevolent to one who is mean to you. He did so in order to admonish you that since you did that, He is more worthy than you of benevolence. You are more worthy of being thus treated; so, He thus ordered you to .adopt such a way of treating others

The benefit which you reap from such a treatment is much greater than the benefit which He ordered you to bestow upon the person with whom you beautifully dealt. If you discern well, you will see his mistreatment of yourself. What raised your status is a favor worthy of being appreciated, in addition to rewarding

p: ۵۹

(an evil deed with a good one.(۱

All of this is based on the assumption that the others have mistreated you; otherwise, it is assumed that you are the oppressor, or you feign being oppressed, as can be seen when observing the conditions of most people, for then the matter is much more clear. We have seen how everyone complains and charges others of oppressing him, yet we have never seen two opponents, be they from among the righteous or the evildoers, admitting .oppressing or trespassing on each other

Rather, we still see men of righteousness and piety disputing, each claiming as being oppressed by the other, and that he is the one who had done favors to the other, tolerated him, never lied or dared to antagonize him. Be informed that this is one of the schemes of the evil-insinuating 'nafs,' its way of making wrong look right so that the .matter will be confused

For this reason, the Wise Legislator rendered the testimony of justice to Himself. He did not permit reliance in this regard on His Justice. Hence, a fair and wise person ought to indict himself with regard to his own self (nafs) and reject its testimony in his favor, a testimony which the Legislator rejects. Such is not the one you are accustomed to, the one friendship with whom you initiate, if the purpose of your friendship is to be of benefit to him rather than to benefit from him. You have set your mind at

p: ۶۰

This statement is the outcome of one who seeks his Lord and who changes his attitude -۱ towards existence and the movement of life. It is from here that knowledge and insight serve as the first introduction to walking towards perfection; so, look into how one who treads the path changes a dispute, which carries a great measure of oppression, into a tool of seeking closeness to the Master, the True One. Through it, a servant of Allah proves to his Master in all his mobility and immobility, especially when he is angry or when stirred by desire, that they cause feet to slip, the feet of the commoners as well as those of the elite. Quite often, both of these bring about a continuous trial and tribulation, through either the fire or through being distant from the truth, the latter no less

.inflammatory than the first if one only has a heart and listens, and he is a witness

.ease when you lost your hope from people, putting an end to coveting what they have

This, indeed, is the greatest wealth, the wealth of one's nafs. Moreover, the first charity which you bestow upon people is that you spare them your own harm. The first is that you do not hurt them; you do not cause them any harm, then you set your mind on tolerating theirs. Furthermore, let your concern be how to get goodness to reach them. So, if your soul is determined to do that, and if you receive a reward on account of a good deed which you did, this is a blessing which is not expected, something which you enjoy, something that will deeply impress you. And if you see that they have disregarded it, .hoping you would accept it from them, accept it

Accepting it is doing them a good deed even when you have no need for it, for returning it to them will make them unhappy and is a bad deed while you yourself have decided to do no bad deed to them, and thus you are ordered(١). And if their goodness was a token of appreciation of getting to know you, and if they expect you to return it to them, accept it .from them then return it to them as a new present according to their own wish

But if their intention is that you accept it from them then you reward them with something else even better, accept

p: ۶١

١- This is another portrait of reality in the methodology of the author. Kindness and good manners are among the essential attributes of one who seeks to tread this path [of seeking Allah]. Quite often have we seen how those who do not have the insight and are seeking the same path causing others harm with a statement or an action, or weakening them, or causing them to be worried in the pretext of elevating them above the life of this world and forsaking people. Thus, they are being unmindful of the fact that anyone who breaks a Muslim has to mend him (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ۴۵). Without such mending, Allah may break something of his own self, a breaking for which there is no mending neither in the .life of this world nor in that of the Hereafter

it from them and reward them with something more. Such is goodness to them. Do not make them aware of you knowing their intention that they gave it to you in order to get something else in its place; rather, let it look natural, for such is goodness on your part to .them

The outcome, my Brother, is that Allah orders you to be fair, to be benevolent, and just as you treat others, so shall you, too, be treated. And be informed that the cornerstone of being good to people is not giving them money, for we have seen many people spending a lot of money, while such spending is not benevolence at all; rather, it is followed by .harm, by causing people grief

It fits the category of an act of charity followed by the doer with an act of harm as an outcome, even if the goal is benevolence. They simply do not know how to do it properly. All of this is the result of neglecting the principles laid down by Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and not .paying attention to their methodology

If you want to take care of the need of your believing Brother according to the way of Ahl ,al-Bayt ('a), be informed that they ('a) have said

Taking care of someone's need is done through different ways: either minimizing it so it' will get maximized, or hastening it so that it will bring happiness, or keeping it as a secret so it will come out into the

p: ۶۲

.(open.' (Tuhaf al-`Uqul, p. ۴۰۳, in almost the same wording

If these issues are not combined, taking care of the need cannot be accomplished; rather, it will be incomplete, tinted with displeasure; it may even bring harm to the one in .need

People are such that when they take care of one's need, they violate all these issues. Their actions will not take care of anyone's need as it should be. This is the main reason why they have to swallow the bitterness of spending so much of their wealth without earning the desired outcome which is: bringing happiness to the heart of a believer. You can see how when they do someone a favor, first they promise to do it for him, then they take their time, so he starts tasting the bitterness of waiting which is more harsh than .killing

Then he tastes the bitterness of many times losing hope that his need will be taken care of. After some time, his need is taken care of, after having tasted the bitterness of asking for help, the bitterness of embarrassment, the bitterness of waiting, the bitterness of losing hope, and the bitterness of feeling embarrassed before the people whom he promised, relying on the promise with which he was given, a promise which was not fulfilled... What pleasure, then, remains after all of this?! Actually, its harm proved to be more than its benefit! Such is people's habit when someone needs them. They do not ,minimize it and say

This is'

p: ۶۳

nothing compared to the dignity of a believer whose dignity, according to some traditions, is regarded as greater than that of the sanctity of the Ka`ba'. (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۶۴, p .(۷۱

Rather, they demonstrate the attitude that they did such a great favor to him, expecting him to abandon his worship of Allah, the most Exalted One and the most Great, and !worship them as a slave instead

Also, they do not hide it from the public so it may be closer to sincerity and distant from ,hypocrisy, becoming a purely intended action hinted at in the qudsi hadith which says

'.Yours is the task of hiding it [from the public], whereas Mine is to make it manifest'

Instead, they tell the whole world about it. This is one of people's contemptible habits, .and observing it needs no explanation

Be informed, therefore, from what we have already stated, that benevolence does not depend on spending funds but on observing the issues which we have mentioned. Benevolence to a person is doing something according to his own wish while taking (precautions against displeasing him.(۱

Anyone whose goal is that you accept what he gives you, your own benevolence is when you do accept it from him. If you wish your hand should be the uppermost, reward him with something better or with the same, actions which are not hidden from those who carefully look into and observe the particulars of the recommendations and norms of .(conduct of Ahl al-Bayt ('a

When you socialize with people, base

p: ۶۴

The issue of avoiding displeasing others, especially innocent people, is one of which - ١ anyone who seeks this path must be mindful, for it often is a cause of failure. Whenever a servant of Allah purifies his intention and gets nearer to his Lord, the seriousness of the offense of displeasing him gets even greater. Allah Almighty is always with those who are displeased (according to Da`awat al-Rawindi, p. ١٢٠). And He is swift in supporting His believing servant. It is narrated once that a woman was hurled into the fire of hell on account of a pussy-cat which she confined. She neither fed her, nor did she let her eat of what the earth produces (Al-Had'aiq, Vol. ٧, p. ٢٧١); so, what would you say about someone in whose heart Allah manifests Himself, so He becomes one of his own ?concerns

your intention on your desire to be of benefit to them. Have no intention whatsoever to benefit from them, so much so that if you hope for any benefit from them, you should desire it from the One with Whom you do not ever feel disappointed, nor is miserliness near to Him. Do not let people take most of your time, making them your concern and :(source of worry, for you are thus ordered by Ahl al-Bayt ('a

Decrease the number of those whom you know, and deny knowledge of those whom you' .(came to know.' (Al-Mustadrak, Vol. ۱۱, p. ۳۸۷

The wisdom in all of this is that they should not divert you from paying your full attention to your Creator. Dedicating one's self to worship, keeping the mind concentrated on doing so rather than on anything else besides it that may distract one from Allah, is a goal that cannot be achieved by too much socializing, and what heat cures is different than that ,(cured by grapes. Someone said to one of the Imams ('a

'.You have sought seclusion at the Aqeeq and rushed to be all by yourself'

,The Imam ('a) answered him by saying

Had you tasted the sweetness of [such] seclusion, you would have desired to leave your' .(own self alone!' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۵, p. ۲۵۴

The goal is that although you do need the people with whom you live, such coexistence .should be just as we have described for you

The goal is not to let yourself be involved in

p: ۶۵

the affairs of the people. One has to divide and distribute his time. You need time to plead to Allah and time to socialize provided such socializing brings you the Pleasure of Allah and is intended just to seek such a Pleasure. Let your share of the first be the most, and let it be your primary concern and objective, for it is required of you in the first place(١) .and so that you may render the second to the first

If you do not, you will be inclined to please your own self with it, thus it becomes a catastrophe on you. You will then fail to earn anything useful for yourself, be it in the life of this world or in the Hereafter, and you will have fallen into the same oppression and complaint about oppression wherein people have fallen. And you will painfully complain from all those whom you befriended. They, too, will continue to complain against you, so .you will never win their pleasure at all

There is neither goodness nor peace of mind except when one fully sets his heart on Allah, turning to Him wholeheartedly. It is thus that every worry about the responsibilities of this life or about those of the Hereafter becomes easy. Every weariness, distress, hardship and depression results from one being distracted from Allah and running away from Him. This is relevant to the First issue of those which bind anyone who wishes to .tread the path to Allah

Second: He has

p: ۶۶

The main responsibility of mankind must not be forgotten. We notice how some - ١ beginners occupy themselves with doing what originally pleases Allah, then they get occupied with what distracts them from Allah Almighty. For example, when one enters a mosque in order to reconcile between two disputants, so he thus gets involved to the extent that he starts acting as though he had been one of the disputants; therefore, he starts becoming harsh in making his statements. He may even permit himself to listen to what he is not supposed to, such as one of the disputants going too far so as he reveals a

hidden injustice unrelated to the oppressed person. Thus, one starts something for the sake of getting close to Allah as a first step, not as an ongoing process. The solution is: .continuation is harder to undertake than initiation, as is well known

to observe people's rights with regard to Allah. Observing people's rights with regard to Allah is actually observing Allah's rights. Likewise, neglecting them means neglecting the .right of Allah

If you seek this, be informed that people have numerous rights with which you must be familiar so that you may not be ignorant of Allah's right in their regard. Once you get to know them, you will seek help from Allah to carry them out, to undertake them. If you are incapable of observing them, your own admission of your incapability will stand as your .own observance thereof

One such rights is that they say 'Ali ('a) is a servant of Allah.' How do you discharge your responsibility towards one who says this sacred statement? Rather, how can you know which rights you are obligated to be familiar with? Rather, how can you even imagine !what his right is?! Far, far away

The right of one who believes in this statement is connected to the right of the one to whom it is attached, namely Ali ('a), and the right of Ali ('a) is connected to the right of the Messenger of Allah ('a), and the right of the Messenger of Allah ('a) is connected to the right of Allah Almighty; so, how can anyone undertake the right of Allah while the ,Messenger of Allah ('a) has said to Abu Dharr

The rights of Allah, the most Praised One, are greater than can His servants carry out,' and the blessings of Allah are

more numerous than His servants can count?! But you must welcome the night repentant (and welcome the morning repentant.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۴, p. ۷۶).(۱

The Messenger of Allah ('a) once said to some of his companions as he ('a) pointed to Ali ' ,(('a

Befriend the friend of this man even if he had killed your father and offspring, and be the .(enemy of this man even if he were your father or son.' (Was'ail al- Shi`ah, Vol. ۱۶, p. ۱۷۸

So, if he recognizes his connection with Ali ('a) and his acceptance of the Imam's mastership, you are obligated to forgive him for having killed your father or offspring. What would you say, then, about something much less than that?! Rather, it is not enough if you simply forgive and forget but you have, moreover, to love, to be generous to and to respect him just as the said mastership requires. Actually, even if you offer your own life to be sacrificed for his sake, it will still be little compared to the right of the one to whom ,he is connected. A poet has done well when he said

,Not the love for the houses did occupy my heart

.But it is the love for those who lived therein

When you demonstrate forgiveness for one who loves the Commander of the Faithful ('a), Allah is more apt to forgive all your sins as His way of appreciating your acceptance of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) as your master, for Allah more than

p: ۶۸

Notice this gradual process to which the author attracts our attention and how one who -۱

seeks to tread the path which leads to Allah does not look at matters lightly or naively. He moves from the principles till he reaches the objectives, looking at all issues as related to Allah Almighty. And whenever his connection with Him intensifies, so does his realization of His right. Doing injustice to the right of a believer is by no means doing injustice to an individual whose link from his Master is cut off. Rather, it is injustice towards an individual regarding whom Allah Almighty undertook a pledge to defend. And who can confront one ?!whose defender and supporter is Allah Almighty Himself

you loves the Commander of the Faithful ('a). When you see that one is falling short in his obedience of the Commander of the Faithful ('a), yet you take into account the mere connection with the Imam, your respect for the Commander of the Faithful ('a) will thus .weigh even heavier in such a case, for it by itself is worthy of respect

Perhaps you respect him on account of his own merits that are worthy of respect, not for the mere connection (referred to above), your respect will hence be indicative of the strength of your veneration. Without such strength and intensity, you would not have .been able to overcome the objections

This covers one of the rights, and it by itself suffices, yet you will not be able to carry it out! So what would you say if you add to it the fact that he belongs to the progeny of Ali ('a)?! And what would you say when you add to this his being one of his guests, or one of his neighbors, or one of the servants of his shrine, or his name is the same or is the same as that of one of his offspring, or his name is indicative of his connection to them, such as '(?!Athe servant of Ali ('a),' or the Aslave of al-Husain ('a

Besides the above are the rights of kinship, neighborliness, companionship, supplication, teaching the Qur'an, teaching a branch of knowledge or a norm of perfection, age, your mujtahid, Imam

of the jama`ahaha, one who is benevolent to some of your kinsfolk or neighbors or even inquiring about your well-being, a student, someone who thinks well of you... up to the end of the list of those included in Risalat al-Huqooq (bill of rights) of our master Ali ('a) son of al-Husain ('a). All are considered as great rights by Ahl al-Bayt ('a), rights about which one will be questioned on the Day of Judgment (as we read on p. ۲۵۵ of Tuhaf al-`Uqul)(۱).

How can you ever be saved from them or find an excuse about them since it has been said that three will complain to Allah on the Day of Judgment: a deserted mosque, a copy of the Qur'an lying down in a house with dust covering it and nobody reading it, and a scholar in his place with nobody listening to him?! (`Iddat al-Da`i, p. ۲۷۲). What is the condition of one who is brought to judgment and against whom three lodge complaints with the Just Ruler: (۱) a house of Allah, (۲) the Book of Allah and (۳) a wali of Allah?!

Whose complaint will not be heard? And which of them will deny a right or a sanctity with Allah? These are all great rights; so, how can you seek any excuse about them during that momentous situation? It has been quoted that a person may sneeze but nobody invokes Allah's mercy for him, so he comes to complain, and injustice to him on the

p: ۷۰

۱- The 'bill of rights' [of Imam Zainul-`Abidin ('a)] cannot be ignored by those who seek a path to Allah Almighty. And who is more capable than Zainul-`Abidin ('a) in explaining the rights of Allah and those of His servants?! It is very necessary for one who seeks this path to be familiar with the collection of texts and rights cited from the Imams of Guidance ('a) in the field of seeking the pleasure of Allah Almighty, for they are the most knowledgeable of all people of what brings one closer to Allah. What a disappointment and a loss it is if one exhausts his life-span in repeating the words of one who make claims to have had such knowledge, abandoning those who inhabited houses wherein Allah permitted that He is adored and His Name is lauded?!

.Day of Judgment will be redressed

So, my Brother who is seeking the right guidance! If you rationally discern through your intellect, the intellect which Allah granted you so that you may see things as they are, you will be concerned about nothing more than admitting your shortcoming and exerting the effort to save your neck from your responsibilities. You will see that even if they exaggerate in demanding their rights of you, still, you are questioned about the rights which they have against you. Your concern will be to beg for an exemption therefrom. You will apologize to them and go over-board in being benevolent to them as much as you can, hoping Allah will overlook your shortcoming and please them on your behalf with .regard to some of their rights

If you look at people with such discerning foresight with which Allah blessed you, it will be .easier for you to seek the path leading to Allah. This covers the Second issue

Third: One must feel uneasy being with people and find ease and comfort being with Allah. A wise person looks after his most important undertaking, safeguarding his tongue, being knowledgeable of the people of his time, feeling uneasy being with the most trusted of his brethren. Anyone who has such merits is included in a supplication by Imam Ali (ʻa) ,who said

'May Allah strengthen him and grant him His security on the Day of Judgment'

as we read in Al-Kafi, Vol. ۱, p. ۴۹. In the same reference, Jabir

p: ۷۱

,ibn Abdullah al-Ansari] is quoted as having said]

I visited the father of Ja`far, Ali ('a), who said to me, 'O Jabir! By Allah! I am grieved, and' my heart is upset. 'I said to him, 'May I be sacrificed for your sake! What is the cause of your grief, and why are you depressed?' He said, 'O Jabir! If anyone's heart is filled with pure adoration of Allah, such a heart will be distracted from embracing anyone else .(besides Him.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ١٠٧

,In a letter to one of his followers, the Commander of the Faithful ('a) wrote saying

One who fears Allah is honored and empowered, satisfied and is never thirsty. He diverts' his attention from the people of this world; so, his body is with them while his heart and .(mind are looking at the Hereafter.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ١٣۶

If a believer, then, feels at ease with the boons granted to him by Allah, having tasted the sweetness of mentioning Allah, he will surely feel uneasy when he departs from such a condition, so he refuses to abandon it. If Allah blesses one of His servants with His support, He would let his heart conform to this condition, occupying him thereby, enabling .him, nevertheless, to pay attention to other aspects as they come up

But if his original concern is paying attention to this condition, so he feels uneasy with such a treasure, desiring to dedicate himself to what he is originally required to do, what is

p: ٧٢

for his own sake first and foremost, such a feeling of uneasiness will not bear an impact on his senses(۱). Also, describing a believer, the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) has said :the following

His grief is hidden inside his heart, while his elation manifests itself on his countenance” .((Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۶۴, p. ۳۰۵

And he may reveal them if the situation demands it, as has been quoted in the dialogue between Imam al-Baqir (‘a) and Jabir. Such is the meaning of a believer feeling uneasy .even with the most trusted of his brethren

If you do not encounter such a situation, that is, when you occupy yourself with worshipping Allah, feeling uncomfortable with being with anyone but Him, including the closest of your brethren, being unable to make your social life an excuse for seeking nearness to Allah because the natural disposition will have overcome you, it is then that you will have your share of feeling comfortable with the human race [rather than with .[Allah

You will in the latter case become a slave of your own ‘self, i.e. nafs.’ You will feel pleased when it is pleased and angry when it is angry. You will exit from the honor of worshipping none but Allah, which is why Allah created you in the first place. He, the most Exalted and Great One, has said, ‘I have created the jinns and mankind only so that they may worship .(Me’ (Qur’an, ۵۱:۵۶

Chapter ۸: A Believer's Conviction is Incomplete Without Certain Merits

Be informed that you are expected to emulate the

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It is important, as the author has pointed out, to hide such sacred conditions from – ۱ people. One may not intend anything but goodness when he reveals it, but there is no guarantee that he will not be afflicted with conceit which may impact a person when not being mindful, something to which everyone other than an infallible person is exposed. Add to this the possibility of a believer exposing another servant of Allah, other than himself, to think ill of him, to accuse him of being a pretender. He will thus be violating the order of his Master not to expose himself to being the object of suspicion. The dignity of a believer is one of the issues of righteousness with which Allah, the most Exalted One, .never entrusted His servant

Sunnah of your Lord, the most Exalted, the most Great, then the Sunnah of your Prophet ('s), then the Sunnah of your Imam. Imam al-Ridha' ('a) is quoted on p. ۲۴۱, Vol. ۲ of Al-Kafi ,as having said

A believer does not reach the degree of conviction (iman) until he has acquired three' merits: He follows a Sunnah from his Lord, a Sunnah from his Prophet ('s), and a Sunnah from his wali (master, Imam). As for a Sunnah from his Lord, he has to conceal His secret; Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, has said, 'He (alone) knows the unseen, and He makes no one acquainted with His mysteries, except a messenger with whom He is pleased...' (Qur'an, ۷۲:۲۶-۲۷). As for a Sunnah of his Prophet ('s), it is tolerating people. Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, ordered His Prophet ('s) to tolerate people, saying, 'Hold to forgiveness; command what is right.' (Qur'an, ۷:۱۹۹). As for a Sunnah from '.his wali, it is taking to patience during trials and tribulations

One who is expected to emulate an Attribute of his Lord whereby He is praised, there is no doubt that he is prepared to assume a great status and a tremendous significance. It is so because Allah thus enables you to enter His abode which He chose and preferred for His friends, the elite ones, the loved ones, and it is Paradise. He, therefore, is bound to guide you to merits which make you look like the residents

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of such an abode so that you will be on par with the abode and with those who reside therein.

As for the abode itself, it is good and pure in the most perfect purity and light. Its residents are the prophets, messengers, martyrs and the truthful; therefore, the wisdom of the Wise One insists that there should be nobody inside this abode who looks like a stranger. Thus, you in such an abode will not look out of place(١). Through His munificence and mercy on you, He does not want you to abide except in the good and pure abode; therefore, His Divine care insists on guiding you to the most sublime of attributes, the most perfect, the most shiny, the most precious.

He does not accept that you should emulate any merits except the ones which, due to their distinction, bring you sublimity and greatness, merits which He attributes to His own Self, praising thereby Himself. One whose merits are attributed to Him fits to reside in the abode related to Him. Since his neighbors in the said abode are friends of Allah, He has obligated him to adopt their mannerism. It is then that the Creator, Praise to Him, shall address his soul, which is now good and pure, having adopted such good and pure merits, saying,

O soul at rest and satisfied! Return to your Lord, well pleased and well-pleasing to Him!' Enter, then, [your abode] among My devotees! Yes, enter My heaven!' (Qur'an, ٨٩:٢٧-٣٠).

These merits are numerous.

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١- These statements, if absorbed, can turn the worship of a servant of Allah from one resulting from an effort to overcome reluctance to the world of adoration which is in sync with the nature of the mood. Since He wishes the residents of this abode to be all in harmony therein, He loves anything which brings about such harmony. If adoration is a

hard undertaking in its first type, it is clear that the worship of a servant will then be involuntary, a manifestation of affectation, earning nothing more than rewards, whereas the true adoration is expected to lift the worshipper to the state of feeling at ease with the Lord of the Worlds. Such an ease makes the worshipper forget any hardship resulting .from the effort to earn His Pleasure

The Imam ('a) selected three of them in particular to be given preference, so much so that he described conviction as hinging on them:

First: One has to keep his secret a secret because most people have shortcomings and are imperfect. But the attributes of perfection are so well known in their goodness, beauty and honor that people wish they have had them to adorn themselves by. Since they run contrarily to what the nafs wants, and since people's determination to oppose their nafs is weak, they feel reluctant to struggle to achieve the above.

But when they find someone with the determination to adorn himself with them, they worry lest he, indeed, should acquire them and thus become superior to them. Since the nafs does not wish to lag behind the peers, actually it by nature wishes to surpass them, these people will try by all means to stop him from achieving his objective with their actions, statements and tricks. One person cannot confront countless people.

The One Who decreed the Shari`ah did not make a way for the believer to save himself from all of this except when one conceals his secret. He must not demonstrate what he is determined to achieve. It is then that he will be spared the evil of people. He will then be able to stay connected with that path.

Since Ahl al-Bayt ('a), the skilled doctors and the kind men of wisdom, know that the evil-insinuating nafs is also one of the believer's enemies,

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belonging to the same category like those that stand to block his way, they ('a) greatly commended the believer to conceal his secret, explaining to him that doing so is one of the attributes of the Lord whereby He praised Himself, and that conviction hinges upon it.

What is meant here is to suspend self-resisting [when listening to Satanic insinuations]: the inclination of the nafs to show-off. The reason is that one to whom such an inclination is manifested will benefit therefrom, or he may be delighted therewith, or his advice or supplication may be solicited, perhaps he will convey such knowledge to those who may benefit from it. There may be other reasons why such a manifestation is sound(۱).

Such hindering insinuations must be rejected if one is sound of judgment at all due to Allah's will that he should hide his secret from them. He must confide his secrets only to the custodians of the secrets, the mysteries, of the Almighty. A wise person does not abandon the doing of what is more wise. He does not do anything except what is most perfect.

It is concluded from the above that the revelation [of one's secrets] harms people and runs contrarily to wisdom. You, too, must follow the example of your Lord in dealing with wisdom. You must avoid what corrupts; otherwise, it is nothing but corruption even if it has the appearance of righteousness! Our master, Imam Ali son of Imam al-Husain ('a), said the following to al-Zuhri:

'Beware of saying

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۱- These are beautiful portraits of how Satan makes wrong look right. He resorts to the method of decorating falsehood in order to make it look like righteousness. Here is the role of one's insight which unveils such decoration; it is one of the requirements of treading the path to Allah Almighty. Such a decoration is possible in every stage of one's

path. It diverts him from what is more important to what is most important. It is, hence, obligatory on every servant of Allah, whenever he goes forward or lags behind, to study the other possible alternatives so that he may select what is better from among similar options. This is closer to acting in accordance with one's actual obligation. This, in truth, is .an act that pleases the Lord

what the hearts reject even if you have an excuse for saying it, for you cannot excuse .(everyone who rejects what you may say.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۱, p. ۱۵۶

:Among the poetry attributed to the Imams ('a) is the following

The jewels of my knowledge shall I from people hide

.Lest an ignorant person should see knowledge and is therewith tried

Before me, the Father of al-Hasan ('a) said the same and why

.To al-Husain ('a), having admonished al-Hasan ('a) thereby

,Lord! If the jewels of certain knowledge I discharged

.I with the sin of adoring idols will be charged

,Thus, some Muslims will find it fit to shed my blood

.Seeing as good what is most abhorred

Such knowledge is very well known. There are many incidents which condone hiding a secret and condemn going to extremes in propagating something. The conclusion achieved therefrom is that one who is dominated by love for secrecy and contempt for its revelation sees through the eyes of reason. When he sees an occasion to reveal, he reveals as much as he sees necessary. Thus, he follows the recommendations of Ahl al-,Bayt ('a) who have said

Do not convey wisdom except to those who are worthy of it; otherwise, you will then do' wisdom injustice. Nor should you hold it back from those who are worthy of it; otherwise, .(you will then be unjust to them.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۲, p. ۷۸

:Be admonished that the attribute of keeping a secret to yourself involves two issues

One is that a believer has a secret to

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keep. The other is that he has the faculty of concealing and hiding to the extent that his own nafs will not over-power him so as to reveal and to publicize it. All of this involves the second. As for the first, suffices it what Imam al-Sadiq ('a) once said to al-Mufaddal ibn Salih:

'O Mufaddal! Allah has servants who deal with Him with the sincerity of His secret, so He deals with them with the sincerity of His kindness. These are the ones whose books of reckoning will pass by Him empty, so when they stand before Him, He shall fill them from the secrets of that with which they entrusted Him.'

Al-Mufaddal asked the Imam,

'Master! Why is that?'

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said,

'He granted them a respite till the time when the custodians [of His secrets] become acquainted with what went on between Him and them.'

Our mentor, 'Abul-`Abbas,' namely Ahmed ibn Fahad, having cited this sacred tradition, said the following by way of comment:

'Do not be unmindful about such lofty stations which are more precious than Paradise itself' (as we read in `Iddat al-Da`i).(١)

,I say that it is to this meaning that a poet refers, having done well when he said

The hearts of those blessed with knowledge have eyes

,That see what onlookers do not see

And the Sunnah with secrets silently speaks

,What even the honored scribes do not know

And hearts fly with no wings

.To the domain of the Lord of the World

.All this is relevant to the first tradition

Second: One has to

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For a believer to have a secret in life is a matter which has been overlooked by most -۱ people. They have contented themselves with building for the life of this world without having a particular endeavor to do what brings them eternal happiness. Every believer who believes in another life wherein the fruit of his deeds will be manifested has to have one particular concern in the field of bringing about a distinctive connection with his Lord, which is the axis of all his activities. It is clear that the nature of this connection varies from one servant of Allah to another according to what one has been given by the Lord of Existence of abilities till the matter reaches His loved one, the Chosen One ('a) who had .with him all certain conditions which neither a close angel nor a sent Prophet could bear

tolerate people. It is a Sunnah narrated about the Prophet ('s). We have already cited Ali ('a) as saying that the one loved by Allah the most is he who emulates His Prophet ('s). The wisdom behind it is similar to that about hiding your secret from people. Actually, the latter is one way to tolerate people.

Al-Kafi quotes Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying,

'The Messenger of Allah ('a) has said, 'My Lord ordered me to tolerate people just as He ordered me to perform the obligations.''

He also cites his grandfather the Prophet ('s) as saying,

'Tolerating people is half the extent of conviction (iman), while kindness to them is half the livelihood.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ١١٧).

Then Imam al-Sadiq ('a) commented saying,

'Socialize with the righteous secretly and socialize with the sinners publicly; do not be harsh with the latter lest they should oppress you. A period of time will come wherein the only one who safeguards his creed is one thought to be not very smart at all. He accustoms himself to being called unintelligent, one lacking the faculty to rationalize.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٩۶).

The Imam ('a) also quotes his grandfather ('a) as saying,

If someone lacks three merits, he cannot accomplish anything: piety which shields him’ from violating the sanctities of Allah (‘a), manners whereby he tolerates people, and clemency whereby he responds to the ignorance of an ignorant person. (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. .(۹۵

,Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) has also said

One who keeps his hand from harming people keeps away only one’

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.(hand while they will keep away from him many.’ (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٩۶

So, my Brother, what some people, who claim to be on the right track and are pious, say that they do not care about people, that they do not need them, and that they take them lightly, up to the end of such statements which fall in the category of lack of toleration..., all of this is actually following one’s own desires. It is ignorance about the way of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)(١).

Many people confuse tolerating people with pretending to get along very well with them, imagining that the mandated toleration is pretension. But the difference between them is quite clear. Contemptible pretension is agreeing on making what is ugly look as though it were beautiful. Or it may be abandoning its rejection out of the desire to attain what they have, so that one may thus acquire some worldly benefits or win their hearts without .avoiding a wrongdoing

What proves the beauty of kindness and toleration is that it leads to everything good. Traditions are very well known about a Syrian man who spoke inappropriately to Imam Ali son of al-Husain (‘a) when the Imam was transported to Yazid, the curse of Allah be on him, in Syria. The Syrian said, ‘Praise be to Allah Who killed you, Who proved your claims false and Who relieved the people of your mischief.’ When the man finished his ,statement, the Imam (‘a) said to him

O sheikh! Do you read’

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١- This is a beautiful portrait of reality and of upholding the way of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) from the viewpoint of one who already does so. Holding others in contempt is one of the well known slippery paths in this field due to what the person who treads the path leading to Allah sees of the bright spiritual portraits which may distract him even from his obligation

while dealing with people. Actually, if he looks at people as being the dependents of Allah Almighty, and that benevolence to them is one of the manifestations of obedience to the One Who created them, he will never hold a single one of them in contempt, even if the latter may be disobedient to his Lord. It is well known that if all the links of adoring the Lord come to an end, the link of the Creator with the one whom He creates remains to the .very end

the Qur'an?' The Syrian answered in the affirmative. The Imam ('a) asked him, 'Have you read this verse: Say: I ask no reward of you for this except the love of those near in kin?' The Syrian again answered in the affirmative. The Imam ('a) asked him, AHave you read this verse: Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, you members of the family, and to make you pure and spotless (Qur'an, ۳۳:۳۳)?' The old man again answered in the affirmative. The Imam ('a) asked him again, 'O sheikh! Have you read this verse: And give to the near in kin his due right (Qur'an, ۱۷:۲۶)?' The Syrian also answered in the affirmative. The Imam ('a) said to him, 'We are the near in kin, and we are the family of '!(your Prophet ('s

It was then that the sheikh raised his hand to the heavens, wept and dissociated himself from Husain's killer [Yazid]. He wept and repented (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۴۵, p. ۱۲۹). So, look !into how kindness attracts one to righteousness

Toleration means abandoning denial in order to avoid or minimize a wrongdoing, or it may be a precaution against initiating a wrongdoing; so, how can this be compared with that?! Toleration may be a measure to avoid the mischief of the person whom you tolerate, or it may be to attract him to righteousness. All these objectives cannot be rejected. Or it may be the outcome of fear, or to render something wrong ineffective. It is

then that kindness, a smile, toleration of harm and rewarding evil with goodness is ,nothing but toleration about which Allah has said

Repel (evil) with what is better: Then will he whom you once hated become, as it were,' your friend and intimate! And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.' .((Qur'an, ۴١:٣۴-٣۵

:And it is similar to this verse

.(Speak gently to him; perhaps he may take warning or fear (Allah).' (Qur'an, ٢٠:۴۴ ...'

:And it is like a statement by Imam al-Sadiq ('a) cited in Al-Kafi as follows

While the Prophet ('s) was once with `Aishah, a man sought permission to meet with him.' The Prophet ('s) said, 'How bad the [timing of the] tribesman is!. `Aishah, therefore, entered her chamber, and the Messenger of Allah ('a) permitted the man to come in. When the man entered, the Messenger of Allah ('a) received him with a smile on his sacred face and kept talking to him. When the man finished his talk and left, `A=ishah said, 'O Messenger of Allah ('a)! You were not pleased with this man coming to meet with you [at a very inappropriate time], yet you welcomed him with your smile and paid him your full attention! The Prophet ('s) said, 'The worst of Allah's servants is one with whom .(you do not wish to sit on account of his sins. (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٢۴۶

This is how one tolerates others. Such toleration is

a sort of taqiyyah. Countless testimonials in favor of taqiyyah exist, so much so that the scholars of exegesis interpret the following verse as referring to it:

Truly the most honored of you in Allah's sight is (he who is) the most righteous [muttaqi] among you.’ (Qur’an, ۴۹:۱۳),

that is, the most fair in observing taqiyyah. It is even said that nine out of the ten portions of faith lies in taqiyyah as we read on p. ۱۷۲, Vol. ۲, of Al-Kafi.

Suffices you a statement in Al-Kafi by Hammad ibn Waqid al-Fahham who said, ‘I once met Abu Abdullah (‘a) face-to-face, but I turned my face away from him and kept going. After that I visited him and said, ‘May I be sacrificed for your sake! I meet you face-to-face but I turn my face away from you out of my fear to trouble you.’ He (‘a) said to me,

May Allah have mercy on you! But a man met me yesterday at such-and-such a place’ and said to me, ‘O Abu Abdullah!. Yet there was nothing good or beautiful about meeting him.’ (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. ۱۷۳).

So, notice how the man earned the Imam’s supplication to Allah to have mercy on him when he did not greet him upon seeing him face-to-face, and notice how one did not take note of the Imam’s status, so the Imam was not pleased with him and said that Athere was nothing good or beautiful about such a meeting(۱).’

From this incident and its likes, you come

From this narrative and its likes do you come to know an important principle in the rules -۱ of dealing with people as required by Ahl al-Bayt ('a). This principle is: taking everything into consideration when options abound. A believer opts for the most wise course of action, ignoring all others. Rationality, something which is advocated by numerous traditions, requires a believer to look into one matter from various angles so that, having done his calculations, he may arrive at the one which in the end pleases Allah Almighty the most, even when there are other options which please Him, too, but they are no match to .his ultimate objective

to know that a believer may abandon being gracious to someone when his action brings the latter envy and dissension. One may even be gracious to another by speaking ill of him as some Imams ('a) did to some of their closest friends; it is similar to the incident when al-Khidr ('a) made a hole in a ship so it might be spared confiscation by an .oppressive king

Third: Patience during the time of trials and tribulations. There is no doubt that life is a believer's jail. Any jail producing something good is by itself good. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said :the following to a man who complained to him about being needy

Be patient; Allah will find an outlet for you.' Then the Imam remained silent for some time' following which he asked the same man, 'Tell me, how is Kufa's jail?' 'Not roomy at all,' the man answered, 'and it stinks. Its inmates are in the very worst of condition.' The Imam said to the man, 'You are already in a jail, and you nevertheless want to be enjoying ease while still being there! Have you not come to know that life is a believer's .(jail?' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ١٩٥

A believer may either be eager for the Hereafter, so the basis of his stay in life is that the latter feels like a prison for him in addition to the other calamities to which he may be ,exposed(١). Or he may be one feared as having inclinations for this world

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What a way this is to bring about a feeling of eagerness to those who are suffering -١ from trials and tribulations! The compiler has clarified the effect of tribulation on all kinds of people, starting from the people of the Hereafter and ending with the custodians of the creed. But there is a huge difference between the effect of problems on the people who seek the Hereafter: It increases the latter's eagerness to the abode wherein there is neither tribulation nor exhaustion. It [adversely] affects the people who run after this life. It increases the rewards of those who inwardly feel closer to Allah. Such closeness is

prompted by the Divine bliss which is relevant only to His friends, those who follow His Commandments, who are aware of His watchful eyes. It is from this onset that the Divine blessing descends upon those who are satisfied with their lots: 'We belong to Allah, and to Him is our return.' It is well known that the implication here is not simply that we shall be brought before Him [for judgment] without the existence of a state of link with the Absolute King, with the depth of belonging to Him.

desiring what is in it, so the munificence of the most Wise One comes to disturb him with all kinds of problems so that he may find it [life in this world] repugnant and not feel comfortable therewith; it is the abode of the oppressors. Or he may be weak in his deeds of righteousness, obeying a little [of Allah's commandments]. The munificence of the most Wise One comes not to deprive him of the garment of trials and tribulations. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has said,

'Had a believer known how many rewards he would have when afflicted with problems, he would have wished to be ripped off with scissors.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ١٩٨).

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has said,

'If a believer is tried with an affliction, and if he takes to patience, he will be rewarded with rewards fit for a thousand martyrs.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٧٥).

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has also said,

'A servant of Allah may have a special status with Allah, the most Great, the most Exalted One, which he earns through one of two merits: his wealth may disappear, or he may be tried with an affliction in his own body.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ١٩٩).

Affliction, then, may either bring a believer rewards, thus elevating his status, or it may be his penalty and atonement, and both are good and liked by a man of wisdom. As for the rewards, this is quite obvious. As for the penalty, it is on account of narratives from Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that

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Allah is too Gracious to penalize His servant twice [in the life of this world as well as in the Hereafter]. Anything for which He penalizes him in the life of this world, he is not going to penalize him for it in the Hereafter.

So, if a believer has to be afflicted, he has to be patient. Allah created patience before affliction; otherwise, a believer's heart would have cracked like an egg falling on a solid ground. Imam Ali ('a) is quoted in Al-Kafi as having cited the Messenger of Allah ('a) as saying,

Patience is of three types: at the time of affliction, during the time of obedience [of Allah's' Commandments] and at the time of avoiding committing a transgression. One who is patient when afflicted till he is solaced, Allah will write for him three hundred degrees between each is like the distance between the heavens and the earth. One who is patient while obeying [his Maker], Allah will write for him six hundred degrees, the distance between each is like the distance between the corners of the earth and the `Arsh. And when one is patient in order not to commit a transgression, Allah writes for him nine hundred degrees the distance between each is like the distance between the corners of the earth and the end of the `Arsh.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. ۷۵).

Al-Kafi also cites Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying,

'We [Ahl al-Bayt ('a)] are quite patient, and our Shi`ah are even more so.'

Someone said to

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,him

?'!May I be your sacrifice! How can your Shi`ah be more patient than you'

,The Imam ('a) said

It is so because we are patient about what we know, whereas they are patient about' .(what they do not know.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. ۷۶

Notice how kind Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are! Notice how they appreciate their Shi`ah, how the latter are rewarded even for the few calamities which are a fraction of those with which Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are afflicted. They want their Shi`ah to be attached to them so that they .would not be separated from them

In the latter case, their Shi`ah would decrease in number and perish, for Ahl al-Bayt ('a) know that their Shi`ah cannot receive salvation except when Ahl al-Bayt ('a) consider them as part of them, making their holy souls and those of their Shi`ah one in kind. It is .then that there will be no possibility of rejecting the whole; everyone has to be accepted

But if each person is judged individually, their Shi`ah will inevitably perish. Their ultimate concern, their earnest objective with regard to their Shi`ah, is that the latter become like ,them just as the Commander of the Faithful ('a) said

.(One who emulates a people almost becomes one of them.' (Nahjul-Balaghah, axiom ۲۰۷'

Then they perfect all of this with their own intercession and with supplicating for their Shi`ah. For example, the supplication of the Imam of the Time ('a), may Allah hasten his reappearance and make me one of his sacrifices, which was

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heard by the Sayyid son of al-Tawus. It is the one in which he, while being inside the vault, supplicates for the Shi`ah of Ahl al-Bayt ('a). Some of its text has slipped my memory. It :includes the following

Lord! Our Shi`ah are of us! They were created of the remnant of our mold and kneaded' with the noor of our wilaya; so, place us in charge of their affairs, forgive the sins which they have committed out of their reliance on their love for us, and when their scales [of good deeds] become light, make them heavy with the surplus of our own good deeds.' .((Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۳۵, p. ۳۰۳, narrated in various different wordings)(۱

Look at him, may Allah hasten his reappearance, and may He make me his sacrifice, and how he goes to extremes in mixing the Shi`ah with their Ahl al-Bayt ('a) so that they do not get separated from each other. He once says that both were created from the same mold, and once he says that the followers, sins originate from reliance for salvation from them on love for Ahl al-Bayt ('a). And once he supplicates to his Lord to complete their shortcoming with the surplus of the good deeds of their masters and of those who love .them

,So, brother! They know what we do not. They are the ones who have said

Do not look at the act of disobedience; look at the One Whom you disobey.' (Bihar al-' .(Anwar, Vol. ۷۴, p. ۷۷

Because of their

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Contemplate upon the depth of the emotional link between this Infallible Imam ('a) of -۱ the Time and his subjects who shall be gathered under his banner. This should not make anyone wonder, for the Imam adopts the manners of Allah Almighty to the extreme degrees humanly possible. It is well known that the Imam-in-Charge ('a), during his occultation, is not indifferent to what happens to the nation of his grandfather ('a). It is so because he is the one who is most concerned about the events of this time in all their cycles, just as his grandfather the Commander of the Faithful ('a) used to feel the pain suffered by hungry people in Yamamah or Hijaz or anywhere else. From this onset, a person who truly loves someone does not add his own burden of worries to the burden already suffered by the person whom he loves. Rather, he tries his best to decrease his worries by doing whatever is required to remove the grief of his friend. Add to this how he goes far in supplicating for an ease for his hardship; surely there is no ease from hardship .for all people except through his reappearance

knowledge of our disobedience, and due to the intensity of their fear for us lest we should perish, they have guided us to the path of salvation which leads to safety. This path is: exerting a real effort to emulate Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as much as possible, so much so that one's main concern should be not to forget about them for a twinkling of an eye. This is so on account of what Imam al-Ridha' ('a) has said, that is, he is satisfied from a believer .(mu'min) with his following of his master's tradition

He means that such a tradition incorporates all other traditions. Patience, then, in its three stages: during the time of affliction, during the time of obedience and during the time avoiding disobedience, leaves no tradition without including it. It has already been stated :in the transmissions relevant to mut`ah that

I hate for any man among you not to adorn himself with a merit done by the Messenger' '.(of Allah ('a

The book titled Al-Faqih quotes Bakr ibn Muhammad who cites Abu Abdullah ('a) saying ,that he asked the Imam ('a) about the mut`ah. The Imam ('a) answered

I hate for a Muslim man to leave this life and there is one merit of the Messenger of Allah' .(('a) which he did not do.' (Al-Faqih, Vol. ۳, p. ۴۶۳

It is also narrated that a believer is not complete till he performs the mut`ah (Al-Faqih, Vol. ۳, p. ۴۶۶). Imam al-Sadiq ('a), in an agreed upon tradition, is

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,quoted as having said

I hate for a man to die leaving one tradition of the Messenger of Allah ('a) without' .(practicing it.' (Al-Faqih, Vol. ۳, p. ۴۶۶)(۱

This proves that Ahl al-Bayt ('a) do not wish their Shi`ah to neglect any of their practiced traditions. And if someone does so, he will be liable to do something hateful to them [i.e. smear their reputation]; may Allah protect us and our brethren from doing that, and may .He enable us to bring happiness to them

There is no harm here in pointing out to some of their traditions which they very much cared about, so much so that they upheld them and paid attention to them to the extent of treating them as obligations, perhaps Allah will enable us to emulate them in upholding these traditions except when there is a very strong reason not to, and in the presence of :more serious obstacles

Fulfilling a Promise: The way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is that a believer must hold himself accountable to fulfilling his promise, out of his precaution against eventualities because of which he may fall into breaking his promise which, in their view, is quite serious(۲). As long as one cannot control unexpected events, he is not counted as a violator. If he makes a promise, he must uphold it and not falter. One who falters in fulfilling his promise goes against the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a). Thus, he excludes himself from their motto, entering in the motto of others; may

p: ۹۱

۱- But one must not be unmindful with regard to the law of making the best option when plenty are available about what is commendable. The traditions, in their first text, call for

good merits, leaving the evaluation of practicing them to the individual himself who should rely on his insight and knowledge of the other principles of the Shari`ah. For example, the traditions relevant to the mut`ah, which the compiler mentions, advocate the revival of this tradition which cures a lingering problem in everyday life which cannot be solved except through permanent or temporary marriage, or the alternative is adultery. There is no comparison between what is haram and what is a Sunnah advocated by the Prophet ('s) and by the Imams ('a) from among his offspring. But, by way of comparison, we have to take notice of another text which explains the importance of paying attention to other comparable issues when we implement the Sunnah. The father of al-Hasan ('a) is quoted as having said the following to some of his followers: 'Do not over-emphasize the practice of mut`ah; rather, you should observe the Sunnah. Do not let it [mut`ah] distract you from your beds and lawful wives, or else the latter would disbelieve, dissociate themselves, complain about this practice and [even] condemn us.' .((Was'ail al- Shi`ah, Vol. ۱۴, p. ۴۵۰

۲- Notice the expression of the author, how he emphasizes this point although there is no proof from the Shari`ah that breaking a promise, because of an unexpected event, especially in the presence of the sincere intention to fulfill it, is haram. A believer who watches his conduct reaches a point where he avoids doing anything held by the Lord as ugly and contemptible, though it is not necessarily haram. He does so out of his apprehension lest he should incur the Wrath of the Master even in a degree commensurate with the extent of the deed. A lover is prompted by avoiding doing anything which the one he loves dislikes even if he is not obligated to do so as we, lovers in this world, do. So, what would you say about the love for the One loving Whom is the ?!blessed result of His own munificence and favors

.Allah protect us against such a situation

What brings this notion closer to your comprehension is the will which the Prophet ('s) made to Ali ('a) to pay off his debts on his behalf(۱) and to likewise fulfill his pledges. Had he not regarded his pledge just as he regarded a debt, and had he not held his conscience responsible for fulfilling it, his greatest excuse would have been death and thus inability to fulfill it; otherwise, he would not have needed to obligate his wasi [the Commander of the Faithful ('a)] to pay off his debts [and fulfill his pledges on his behalf]. Indeed, a poet did :well when he composed the following lines

,A good man is one who does good without a promise

;And one who fulfills a promise is half a man

,But if someone did not do either, he is a woman

.And half a woman is one who insists on so doing

Be advised that what we mean by fulfilling a promise, which is the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a), when obstacles arise and excuses become available, is the situation when one is still able to fulfill his promise. But in the absence of such obstacles, this goes without saying. Breaking a promise without an excuse is surely a defect in the individual and an ugliness even if done by the least of all people. Such a conduct is not worthy of inclusion among the .attributes of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) which we would like to urge others to emulate

Other

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۱ - Historians estimate the debts left by the Messenger of Allah ('a) at the time of his demise to be close to ۴۰۰,۰۰۰ dirhams which Ali ('a) did, indeed, pay off during a number of

.years. __ Tr

:merits are

Voluntary Benevolence Beyond and More than a Pledge: They treat this as an obligation. The Prophet ('s) was always gracious in fulfilling his promise, that is, it was his habit, whenever he borrowed, to give to the lender more than what he owed him, so much so that he was very well known for sticking to this habit. As for his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), generosity is their demeanor and benevolence is their mark as we recite in the inclusive ziyarah. :They were the embodiment of acting upon this verse

.(Allah commands [the doing of] justice and benevolence...' (Qur'an, ١۶:٩٠'

It is said that Ali ('a) emancipated one thousand slaves from his own personal toil (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۶٣, p. ٣٢٠). He was not satisfied with just emancipating them, but he provided them with means of earning a livelihood as well. Also, once he promised a bedouin to give him four thousand dirhams, so he sold the orchard which had been planted by the Messenger of Allah ('a). He, thus, gave him what he had promised him and .(a lot more (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۴١, p. ۴۵

Voluntary benevolence which exceeds the amount owed, or more than what was promised, has a way in winning people's hearts even if its amount is small. It is (understood, from examining the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a), that they adhered to it.(١

,Self Denial Even While in Need: Allah Almighty has said

They give others in preference over their own selves, even though poverty is their ...'

p: ٩٣

A believer has to absorb the philosophy behind spending in all its Shari`a-related and -١ ethical aspects which include taking into consideration people's feelings. He should bear in mind that what he spends is dealing with the wealth of his Master with the latter's permission, even as he tackles the demands of this Master. So, there should be no amazement after that because what is worthy of amazement is spending from the real wealth, not from the purported wealth. This is why you find them spending while being fearful because they will return to their Master Who will ask them about what they had spent, including spending on commendable causes, because there is a possibility of something wrong with the way whereby they earned the wealth or how they spent it. One of the philosophical aspects of spending is that if one gives someone something by way of charity, he must not follow his giving with reminding that person of it, nor should he follow it with harming him. Doing so nullifies the requirements of benevolence, obstructing the .possibility of its being replenished in the future

.(lot.’ (Qur’an, ۵۹:۹

Be informed that if a believer does not uphold self-denial, making that a priority, he will sooner or later be overcome by his own ego, by the desire to oppress, to abandon equity, though it may be for periods of time. He will then stop being a believer (mu’min), for a .believer is one from whose evil people are safe, unlike one who upholds self-denial

The maximum impetus of the latter’s nafs is that he should abandon such self-denial. So, if he does abandon self-denial, he will not abandon the basis of fulfilling his obligations. At .(any rate, he will be safe from committing injustice(۱

All of this is a drop in the bucket, yet feeling satisfied with this much is better. Allah’s help !do we seek; Allah suffices us, and how Great the One upon Whom we rely is

Chapter ۹: Resigning to Destiny

Be informed, as we have already stated, that a believer ascends the heights when he emulates the Prophet (‘s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). It is narrated in Al-Kafi that the son of ,Ibn Ya`fur quotes Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) as having said

The Messenger of Allah (‘a) never said about something that had happened in the past, ‘I’ .(wish something else had taken place.’ (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. ۵۲

Notice how he (‘a) did not wish anything other than what was the reality, fearing to incur the displease of the Almighty. What a believer is required to do is to accustom himself to

accepting the status quo no matter what. And

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This observation by the author is beautiful. He sets safe cycles for the believer further -۱ from the dangerous ones. He calls for self-denial which, were one to obey his own inclination to abandon it, will still maintain the basis of his spending security against extravagance. This is the way which has to be followed in all ethical fields; otherwise, one who seeks a path to Allah will permit himself to enjoy some permissible facets the legality of which is in doubt, such as talking nonsense or doing what is haram. His nafs will then .entice him into looking at what is definitely haram

be informed that the origin of displeasure, of wishing something other than the status quo, is ignorance of the wisdom behind events and why they take place. Had the wisdom behind things been manifested to him, one would not have desired anything other than .what already is

If a believer accustoms himself to contemplating on the wisdom of things and on their purposes, a great deal of the same would have been manifested to him, and it would have been easy for him to accept them. If there are things which he cannot understand, .(he renders them to the most of what he does not know(۱

There are purposes, and there is wisdom, behind everything. No matter how earnestly one implores his Lord, beseeching Him to show him some facets of a particular thing, He will show him according to his readiness to absorb, according to his ability, to the extent of .his wish and will. This is the shortest way to resigning to destiny

As for being pleased with something [or some event] when the wisdom behind it is unknown, this is quite difficult, taking into consideration what we have already stated. It has been transmitted that our master, Imam al-Hasan (‘a) son of Imam Ali (‘a), taught one Shi`ah man about the world of dreams. He told him that he could get close to Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and become able to see them (in his visions) whenever he wished if he acted :upon the following verses

Shy away from your

p: ۹۵

۱- The insistence of a believer on a particular need springs out of his conviction of the final outcome of things, being convinced that the achievement of that objective will bring him happiness. The truth is that nothing was manifested to such a believer which would bring him such a certainty; so, what makes him insist on being displeased with what Allah has decreed in postponing the fulfillment of his need?! A servant of Allah who insists on his need being fulfilled accuses Allah, even if he may not be aware of it, with regard to His

wisdom which decreed the postponement of the fulfillment of his need, or even of compensating for it in the Hereafter with many, many times as much, so much so that a servant of Allah will then wish not a single desire of his was ever fulfilled in the life of this .world

,worry

;All matters are rendered to destiny

,What is tight may become wide

,And what is wide may become tight

The outcome of something incurring your ire

.May indeed bring you in the end a pleasing desire

Allah causes whatever He does will

:So do not object to His will

,Allah accustomed you to see from Him goodness

.So measure accordingly what already has taken place

By my life, these verses contain a cure for every ailment were one to act upon them, and :their zenith is being pleased with what Allah decrees

And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self–' .(restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.' (Qur'an, ۴۱:۳۵

These sacred verses, coming from the fountainhead of wisdom and the personification of infallibility, contain guidance as to how one can attain such a high status. Among such guidance is that one must shy away from his worries, for this is one of the greatest preludes to attaining such a status. Worries spoil the heart the most. A heart occupied by worries turns away from its Lord, becomes distracted from Him, Glory to Him, because of its worries and griefs. Thus, the heart is done injustice by distracting it from its Maker. The body will, therefore, collapse, and one may fall very seriously ill, leading to its damage and

.annihilation

After despondency, the inability to tackle things, when hopes and aspirations are dashed, you find someone saying, ‘Everything depends on Allah,’ as if Allah entrusted him to his own personal measures which do not fatten

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anyone, nor do they put an end to hunger! All of this results from ignorance of Allah's purpose, of the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a), of feeling comfortable with what the evil-insinuating self is accustomed to.

What Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have advocated is that a believer must accustom himself to avoiding worries so that his heart will be totally filled with remembrance of his Maker. Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, has said,

'... those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah: without doubt, hearts do find rest in the remembrance of Allah.' (Qur'an, ١٣:٢٨).

When the heart turns to the remembrance of Allah, to His kindness, grace, compassion and mercy..., worries, griefs and depression flee away from it. The latter ills result from paying attention to the [evil insinuating] nafs, to doing things as it requires, the feeble that it is, to contraction, to bias in everything, to the desire to keep what is in its possession(١). One must constantly remember his own single pit [grave]: Anything far from it is near, and anything hard is easy when compared to it. Anything in comparison to it is one and the same.

Its requirement is kindness and mercy; so, where are worries and griefs in comparison to it, and why should one then be so sad and depressed? If one feels sad about the past, it will never return. Whatever one lost will be compensated manifold. Perhaps what he lost was not a loss but a

p: ٩٧

١- The problem of worries and depression causes hardship in one's life especially during this century where man's requirements have increased in number. One feels disappointed if he cannot attain them all, thus he falls into a crisis following this feeling of disappointment. The accumulation of such crises causes one to fall into a state of chronic

depression and continuous worry. The only solution is what the author mentions: abandon greed, do not pay attention to anything which brings about worries and sadness by turning only to Allah Almighty. If one deems Allah Almighty as Great, everything else in his eyes dwarves. It is then that comfort, which is referred to in the verse above, is felt.

gain. One thing you lost for which you were compensated with a thousand, or with thousands, or with that which cannot be enumerated or will never deplete [as is the case .in the Hereafter] is not lost at all

So, Brother! Truly, there is no comfort for the heart except in the remembrance of Allah and no unhealthy palpitation except when one turns his attention to his own self, to a narrow world, to miserliness and stinginess, to despondency from the world of the soul, from the domain of comfort. Shying away from worries prompts one to direct his full attention to the ever-Living, the One Who sustains all, or it may prompt one to .contemplate when contemplation does away with worries, wipes out depression

The least means to attaining satisfaction with destiny is turning worries and depression away from one's heart, fully directing one's attention to the domain of the Great One. It is then that we can witness His hidden manifestations of kindness clear and glorious, His guarantees that His servant will have sufficiently with regard to total or partial matters. :This is manifested in this verse of the Greatest One, the most Exalted

.(Does not Allah suffice His servant?' (Qur'an, ٣٩:٣٦'

You have no alternative to rendering all matters to His destiny. Although Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, ordered us to uphold the causes, He did not do so at all except with the condition that one must not rely on such causes totally, thus abandoning reliance

p: ٩٨

.on Him. Rather, one should seek the means out of obedience to His Command

If these means become effective, their effectiveness is achieved through His permission, the most Exalted and the most Great that He is. But if they are not effective, a servant of Allah has carried out his responsibility and is under no obligation. A wise person must follow what his wisdom dictates. A servant of Allah must render any matter to His destiny, .so he must be patient, surrender and accept

If destiny brings something appreciated, then destiny is appreciated. But if it brings what one's nafs does not like, a servant of Allah has to contend himself with the hope that there will be ease after hardship; otherwise, one may disbelieve [if he does not accept Allah's destiny], and the space may seem to be straitened although it is quite spacious. The Wise One, then, is inclined to alter the conditions of His servant so that such a servant .will not contend himself with one particular condition

His goal is that His servant must have Him in mind in all circumstances. When one is enjoying ease, he must not feel secure against a change in a minute. He, therefore, has to keep Him in mind during that minute and every minute, and so on(۱). The same applies to hardship and deprivation. A servant of Allah will then be in a dire need for Him because of .being unable and too weak to tolerate affliction

If the circumstances

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From this clear wisdom, it is known that if a believer invests calamity in dedicating – ۱ himself totally to Allah Almighty, he will not only find calamity as a good companion, he welcomes such a calamity which drives him towards his Lord swiftly. This is why the friends of Allah are not perturbed during the most critical of times. Rather, this is one of the circumstances and conditions which people in this world cannot absorb, let alone .comprehend

of such a servant of Allah have to alternate, one must receive solace from the fact that such circumstances do not last forever. They are fraught with change and alteration; therefore, one ought not depend on the happiness they bring him nor should he be elated ,by their ease. This is based on the verse saying

so that you may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor should you exult over ...' .(favors bestowed upon you' (Qur'an, ٥٧:٢٣

Add to the above, in as far as solace is concerned, the fact that most of these calamities are trials. When a worshipper's condition becomes clear to be either patience, inability, disgruntling, and he gets to know the same about himself..., Allah will then lift that affliction from him and turn the outcome of his affair into ease(١). And it is similar to the ,poetic line saying

The outcome of something incurring your ire

.May indeed bring you in the end a pleasing desire

A test often happens when one is afflicted without a need for its prolongation. If the time period is short, and if its outcome is pleasing, the affliction can then be tolerated. As for the poetic verse saying

,Allah makes happen whatever he does will

,So do not object to His will

it contains a warning against opposing Allah's decree. The Commander of the Faithful ... ,('a) has said

One who dawns depressed because of a worldly concern is actually angry with Allah's' .(destiny.' (Nahjul-Balaghah, short pieces of wisdom, No. ٢٢٨

(Al-Kafi cites Imam al-Sadiq ('a

p: ١٠٠

This is one of the niceties of the author. He assigns for affliction one of these fruitful - ١ outcomes, then he inspires hope in the souls which do not want affliction to perpetuate. Says he, 'If the fruit becomes ripe, when the result is out, Allah Almighty will lift the affliction the aim of which is the bringing about of one of these fruits.' This means that one of the ways to earn a safe outcome is to attain these fruits prior to being afflicted by making an inward struggle, by quite often contemplating on one's nafs, and by admitting .before Allah Almighty of being helpless, weak

saying that Imam al-Hasan (‘a) son of Imam Ali (‘a) met Abdullah ibn Ja`far and asked ,him

O Abdullah! How can a believer believe if he is angry with his lot, degrading his own’ status, while the One to judge him is Allah?! I guarantee for anyone who is pleased with his lot that when he supplicates to Allah, his supplication is answered.’ (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. .(٥١

,As regarding his saying

,Allah accustomed you to see from Him goodness

,So measure accordingly what already has taken place

it has the perfect contemplation on the beautiful things which Allah has for His ,... servants, His great acts of kindness which, when a servant of Allah notices them, will cause him to realize on his own that Allah will not leave him by himself when catastrophes assault him. He will bestow upon him one of his acts of kindness whereby He brings what is dead to life and compensates for what is lost. This as well as the meaning before it are included in poetry attributed to our master Ali (‘a) and cited in Misbah al-Shari`a as :follows

,Pleased I am with what Allah allotted for me

,My affairs have I entrusted to the One Who created me

,Just as Allah was benevolent to me in the past

.So will He for what remains

References to urging one to be pleased with his lot are innumerable. One of them is the ,famous qudsi hadith wherein Allah Almighty says

There is no god but I. Anyone who is not patient when I try'

p: ١٠١

.(him, let him take a god other than Me.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۹, p. ۱۳۲

Such a divine threat suffices to admonish any rational person and to bring an ignorant person to his senses. Al-Husain ibn Khalid quotes his father quoting his ancestors saying ,that the Messenger of Allah ('a) said

Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, has said, 'Whoever is not pleased with My' '.destiny, nor does he believe in the fate which I decree, must seek a god other than Me

,The Messenger of Allah ('a) has also said

In each and every decree of Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, there is' .(something good for the believer.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۶۸, p. ۱۳۹

Be informed, Brother, that 'Allah obliterates whatever He pleases, and He fixes whatever He pleases, and He has with Him the Mother Book.' When a fateful decree approaches a servant of Allah, it comes inclusively, that is, it may include a blessing in it, or it may include a condemnation, or it may appear to be a sort of trial and punishment. If the worshipper thinks well of his Lord, becomes optimistic and decides to accept his destiny, Allah will change what outwardly looks like a wrath into a blessing, reversing the situation, and vice versa(۱). Because of thinking ill of his Master, limited acceptance of destiny and intense anger because of the sources of trials and tribulation, a servant of Allah brings upon himself one affliction after another, turning the blessing upon him

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This is the difference between commoners and the elite people. A naive worshipper - ۱

who does not know the objective of the Lord and His wisdom in dealing with His creation combines the burden of the affliction and [the sin of] grumbling about it, thus losing this life and the Hereafter. As for the selected few, those for whom Allah Almighty opened the gates of His knowledge, these turn anything which comes their way in the life of this world, be it a blessing or an affliction, into sustenance for their Hereafter. What a difference it is between a deed the pleasure of which disappears while its burden remains and one the burden of which disappears while its reward remains!

.into Divine wrath and affliction

Imam al-Ridha' ('a), as we read in Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah, cites his father citing his ancestor saying that the Messenger of Allah ('a) said that Allah revealed to one of His prophets to 'Tell so-and-so the king that I shall cause him to die on such-and-such [date].' The prophet went and informed him. On his bed, the king kept supplicating to Allah till he fell from his bed saying, 'Lord! Postpone my death till my son grows up, then take my soul '.away

Allah revealed to that prophet to tell that king that He agreed to postpone his death and add fifteen years to his life-span. The prophet said, 'Lord! You know that I have never told a lie.' Allah Almighty inspired to him saying, 'You are to follow My orders.' The prophet did, indeed, convey this message to the king, and Allah is never questioned about what He .does, as we read on p. ١٢٣ of Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah

There is no doubt that keeping Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, in mind, seeking refuge with Him, thinking well of Him, initiating an undertaking with offering charity, supplication and joining the ties of kinship..., all this certainly causes a change in .one's destiny

Lord! If I am counted with You as a wretch, or deprived, my sustenance strained, I implore You to write me with You as happy, receiving Your mercy, receiving my sustenance in abundance, for You have said, 'Allah obliterates whatever He pleases, and He

p: ١٠٣

fixes whatever He pleases, and He has with Him the Mother Book,' and do bless .(Muhammad ('s) and his pure progeny (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ٨٧, p. ١٣٥

So, my Brother! How can a worshipper be displeased with his Master's destiny?! Imam al-Ridha' ('a) has cited his forefathers ('a) quoting the Messenger of Allah ('a) as saying that ,Allah says

O children of Adam! You all have strayed save those whom I have guided; you all are' poor save those whom I enriched; you all shall be annihilated save those whom I shall save; so, plead to Me, and I shall give you sufficiently and guide you to the right path of your guidance. Among My believing servants are those who can be improved [spiritually] only when impoverished: If I enrich them, wealth will spoil them. Among My believing servants are those who cannot be improved except if I grant them good health: If I permit them to fall sick, it will spoil them. Among My believing servants are those who exert an effort to worship Me, spending their night praying, so I cause them to be drowsy out of My own kindness to them. They would sleep till the morning and leave the bed self-loathing, self-indicting. But had I permitted them to do what they wanted to do, they would have felt proud of their deed, so they would cause their own souls to perish on account of such pride and feeling of being pleased with themselves, thinking they have surpassed all

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worshippers and excelled in their endeavor beyond the limit of those who fall short. It is then that they grow distant from Me while thinking they are getting closer to Me. None should rely on their own deeds even if they are good, nor should the sinners lose hope [of My mercy] no matter how many sins they have committed. But let them trust in My mercy and hope for My favor. Let them be content with My looking well after them; I deal with My servants in ways which are best for their own good, and I am Munificent towards .(them, fully knowledgeable.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۶۸, p. ۱۴۰

Precise Observations: Ahl Al-bayt ('a) Admonishing Their Shi`ah With Regard to Resigning to Destiny

Be informed that Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have sublime observations regarding resigning to destiny; so, congratulations to whoever pays attention to them and comes across them, for they are among their treasures which they have entrusted to the pages of books. Perhaps such books will reach those who realize their value, knowing how small in .number these are

Indeed, few of Allah's servants are appreciative. We hope Allah will honor this book if we put together in it what other books do not contain. Our main objective is to point out to .what was not recorded, or critique what already is, if its source is not a pure well

One of them is that they took upon themselves not to side with their own selves when ,they are afflicted. Rather

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they receive affliction with resignation and patience till they receive the order to abandon what brought the affliction about and to shun it with supplication. This is why they sometimes appeared submissive to Allah, feeling heart-broken before Him, when they lose the most basic of things such as food and water although they could get anything .only if they simply supplicated to Allah for it

This is only because they have restrained themselves and chained their nafs by not supporting its wishes with supplications. Instead, they prefer to be patient although they have the option to either persevere or side with their own souls [with supplications]. But according to them, patience is the best option, and they do not forget the first option till .they receive the special order to give preference to one over the other

The idea above is made clear in an incident which took place to Imam Ali ('a) son of Imam al-Husain ('a). One of his Shi`ah complained to him of want. The Imam ('a) wept because of feeling so deeply for the man. The man asked the Imam ('a), 'Master! Is not weeping ?'!spared for major calamities and catastrophes

,The Imam ('a) answered him by saying

What calamity and what catastrophe is greater than a Muslim seeing his believing' ?'Brother in need without being able to help him

That Shi`ah man came out of the Imam's meeting place puzzled. Then he heard that the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) were saying, 'How strange these folks are! Once

they claim that the heavens and the earth obey them, and that everything is at their disposal, and once they are unable to provide their own Shi`ah with the least amount of help!' The same poor man went back to the Imam and said, 'My calamity of hearing what these enemies of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have been saying is much greater than my poverty and ,extreme want.' The Imam ('a) said

Woe unto them! Do they not know that Allah has friends who do not provide Him with' '.suggestions?! O servant of Allah! Allah has permitted an ease for you from your hardship

The Imam ('a) gave him food for his iftar as well as suhur. Thus, Allah swiftly removed his hardship, granting him a very large pearl which the man found inside the belly of a fish; he sold it for a large sum of money. The man returned both bread loaves to the Imam ('a) .((Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۴۶, p. ۲۰ with a variation of wording

:This incident is quite famous. The most important part of it is the Imam's statement

?'!Do they not know that Allah has friends who do not provide Him with suggestions'

Similar to this incident is the case of Salman the Persian (ra) who was afflicted by the Jews beating him and saying, 'Why do not you call upon Allah, Muhammad and Ali to speed up our perdition and thus save you from our hands?!' He kept saying to them, 'Patience is better. I rather plead to

p: ۱۰۷

Allah to grant me patience, perhaps Allah will get out of your loins someone who will believe in Islam. If I implore Him to annihilate you all, such a believer will never come into ‘.being

He did not curse them. This went on till the veil between him and the Messenger of Allah (‘a) was removed. The Prophet (‘s) ordered him to implore Allah against them, telling him that they would never produce a believer, as we read on p. ۶٨ of the tafs’r work by Imam .(al-`Askari (‘a

The case in the tafs’r work by Imam al-`Askari (‘a) occurs in the explanation of the verse about ‘those who believe in the unknown’ (Qur’an, ٢:٣). Anyone who likes may refer to it, for it is a timeless wonder. Nobody should find the case of Salman the Persian (ra) hard to believe because nobody should wonder about a man who emulated his masters so much .(that they told him he was one of them, Ahl al-Bayt (‘a

In the same category falls the case of the mi`raj. The Prophet (‘s) was required to perform fifty prayers, and he did not implore his Lord to reduce their number till prophet Moses (‘a) suggested to him to do that. He kept imploring Him to decrease their number till their number was reduced to five. Moses asked him why he did not implore Him to ,reduce their number any more, whereupon he (‘a) said to him

‘.I am too shy because of imploring Him so many times’

It

p: ١٠٨

was then that Allah inspired to him that

Since you are patient with regard to the five prayers, I shall regard them equivalent to' .(fifty.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۱۸, p. ۳۴۸ with a variation of wording

The suggestion of Moses was to request the lightening of the burden. Prior to that encounter with him, the Prophet ('s) did not like the idea to make such a request. The Imam ('a) was asked, 'Why did the Prophet ('s) not ask Allah to lighten the burden before that?' Actually, all prophets before ours ('a) never implored their Lord to exempt them from having to endure some afflictions or strenuous responsibilities relevant to their .nations

As for our Prophet Muhammad ('s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), it did not happen [besides the above] that they ever requested exemption from any responsibility. On account of their welcoming destiny, forgiveness is granted to them through the blessing of upholding what requires hardship and trial. Their Shari`ah, therefore, became the most light of all ,and the most easy, so much so that the Prophet ('s) said

'.I have brought you the tolerant and the easy Shari`ah'

Aqil son of Abu Talib did well when he solaced Abu Dharr who was banished to the Rabatha desert. Ali ('a), both al-Hasan ('a) and al-Husain ('a), as well as Aqil went out to bid Abu Dharr farewell. In order to offer solace to him, Aqil said to him, 'If you plead for .exemption from the affliction, it will be a sign of impatience

p: ۱۰۹

If you consider its removal to have been too slow, it is a sign of despondency. Abandon both impatience and despondency and say, 'Suffices us Allah, and how good He is for help!.' (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۲۲, p. ۴۳۶).

You have already come to know that such lofty stations are well known about the few elite persons who kept Ahl al-Bayt ('a) such good company that they derived from their lantern such noor.

Do not be discouraged by Satan from obtaining your share of such stations. Satan has inspired the people of our time, may Allah guide them, to say that 'Such concepts are confined only to Ahl al-Bayt ('a), that they are specifically relevant to them; so, their implications do not include people like us(۱).' By my life! These folks have strayed greatly, going further away from the right path. These stations, which our minds and imaginations cannot grasp, are for the slaves of Ahl al-Bayt ('a), even for the least significant of their slaves. As for the stations relevant to them, what a distance there is between Venus and the hand that stretches to touch it! What a distance it is from their dreams and the mentalities! Consider just this verse:

'In the Prophet of Allah you truly have a beautiful pattern of (conduct).' (Qur'an, ۳۳:۲۱).

Ahl al-Bayt ('a) render the discussion of ethics and the meanings of norms of conduct to the Messenger of Allah ('a), narrating them from him, urging people to emulate them, attracting people to them, never suggesting

p: ۱۱۰

۱- The compiler has surely accurately diagnosed the wound when he pointed out to one of Satan's greatest deceptions. What a distance there is between the confusion regarding

the particulars of the path after one has walked upon it and the confusion which diverts a servant of Allah from the basis of the movement along the said path! This is the secret. Seeking a path to Allah Almighty has become an exception which only rare servants of Allah undertake. The basis was attachment and feeling comfortable with the life of this world, the running after its wares. One would thus feel satisfied by performing the least of his obligations, something which does not enable him to reach the essence of the Shari`ah. This is why you find those who reject the necessity of taking this path, the one called for by the Qur'an in the verse saying '... so let anyone who will, take a (straight) path to his Lord.' (Qur'an, ٧٣:١٩) not enjoying the sweetness of leading a life under the Shari`ah in its norms of adoration, nor do they achieve perfection in the essence of its legislation.

that anything attributed to him (‘a) is relevant only to him, so nobody should act upon it. !Praise be to Allah! What an obvious fallacy

It has been transmitted that Abu Dharr al-Ghifari used to prefer sickness over health because of the rewards therein (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۷۸, p. ۱۷۳ in a variation of wording). ,One Imam (‘a) stated this fact then commented saying

We are folks who prefer health over sickness. But when we are actually sick, we then’ ‘.prefer sickness over health

Such is the statement coming from the fountainhead of wisdom and infallibility. It attracts one’s attention to preferring the degree of resigning to fate, whether it is with regard to something loved or hated, over the preference of what is hated versus what is loved in .the hope of attaining its rewards and out of eagerness for its compensations

There is no doubt about it; despite its equivalent value to preferring what is hated and its being more liked than when a fateful event does take place, it furthers goes to prefer health over sickness and seeking it when it is not there. If one wishes for it out of his desire to earn its rewards, to feel pleased with it, so it becomes something very much .desired, this is one of the lofty stations which only people such as Abu Dharr can attain

Otherwise, its suggestion is tainted with making a suggestion to Allah and objecting to His destiny. The Imam (‘a) wanted to remove this misconception and point

p: ۱۱۱

out the shortcoming of such wisdom. Such is the station of true moderation, complete straightforwardness to the difficulty of which the Master of both Worlds (‘a) pointed out ,when he said

,(One verse in Surat Hud caused me to grow gray hair.’ (Jawami` al-Jami` , p. ١٧٠’

,a reference to the verse saying

.(therefore, stand firm (on the straight path) as you are commanded.’ (Qur’an, ١١:١١٢ ...’

.Surely Allah has said the truth

Chapter ١٠: Beyond Resignation to Destiny. Reliance on Allah, Submission to Him, Total Surrender to His Will

Be informed that unless one looks into these venues and takes his share of them, he shall never taste the sweetness of conviction, even if such believer already has in them .degrees and stations [reserved for him] according to the degree of his nearness to Allah

,Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, has said

Allah will raise to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have’ .(been granted knowledge.’ (Qur’an, ٥٨:١١

,A poet did well when he said

,Lord! A group wept out of fear of You

,Yet those who wept had no sin of their own

,But in order to seek nearness to You

.They weep hoping for such nearness

Conviction (iman) is a higher degree than belief (Islam) when you compare such stations. The Arab bedouins lied when they claimed to have attained iman as we are told by the :Almighty in this verse

The desert Arabs say, 'We believe.' Say: 'You have not (yet fully) believed; therefore, you' should only say, 'We have submitted our wills to Allah,' for faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah

p: ١١٢

and His Prophet, He will not diminish any of your deeds, for Allah is oft-Forgiving, Most ‘.Merciful

What an embarrassment! What a scandal will afflict those who will lie on that Day, claiming to have iman, calling themselves mu’mins, deceiving only their own selves when :making such a claim! They ought to repeat what another poet has said

;Your nafs deceived you

,Not among those who truly love Him are you

.For those who are in love have many a mark and a clue

,We also ought to pay notice to one who says

,If you love certain people, walk on their path

.None reached there except those who severed ties except theirs

,We should also listen to the verse of the Almighty wherein He says

(Put your trust in Allah if you have faith.’ (Qur’an, ۵:۲۶’

:and also this

No, by your Lord! They can have no (real) faith until they make you judge in all disputes' between them and find in their souls no resistance to your decisions, but accept them .([such decisions] with the fullest conviction.' (Qur'an, ۴:۶۵

If iman is achieved when one relies on Allah and surrenders to His will, realizing their full implications, one must also exert his effort in strengthening anything upon which iman relies and upon whose axis it revolves. Such is the great emphasis in the sacred Book and in the sacred Sunnah for the believers: they should have a sound conviction and uphold all .its requirements which we have enumerated

The most Exalted and the most Great One says, 'O believers

p: ۱۱۳

in the Islamic faith), believe...,' that is, attain your fair share of conviction so that your) conduct must be up to par with it, so that you may enjoy its fruits. Those implied in this Divine call have already attained the minimum requirement of conviction, hence they are not urged to attain it. As for others, it is something extra, perhaps a luxury, and it is not .defined

There is a great deal of emphasis on the arranged order of the middle station, that is, the average individual who feels he surely believes, responding to the Divine Commandments and anything less than that. Anything higher than that is undoubtedly closer to one's perfection of conviction. This middle station is known to be one of the requirements. .Anything less than it is not to have the same label

One must aspire to what is always higher and better. If you contemplate on this statement, you will not hesitate to roll your sleeves and exert your effort and determination to attain the handsome amount of conviction to the extent that you will be worthy of being identified with it. Such has been the advice of Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as ,narrated in Al-Kafi which cites the Imam as saying

You cannot be righteous till you acquire knowledge. You cannot acquire knowledge' unless you are truthful. You cannot be truthful unless you believe. These are four chapters the first of which cannot be sound without its precedent. Those who uphold only three of them stray from

.(the right path a great deal.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٣٩

Also, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), as we are told in Al-Kafi, is quoted by Imam al-Sadiq ('a) who cites his forefathers ('a) quoting the Commander of the Faithful ('a) saying,

Conviction (iman) stands on four corners: reliance on Allah, surrender to His will,' acceptance of His destiny, and yielding to the Commandment of Allah, the most Exalted, .(the most Great.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ۴٧

Also, this has been explained and clarified by our master Musa ibn Ja`far ('a) as quoted in Tuhaf al-`Uqul when he said,

Anyone who is granted by Allah the power for reasoning ought not accuse Him of being' slow in providing him with sustenance, nor should he accuse Him with regard to His '.decrees

He ('a) was asked about sure conviction (yaqin). He said,

It is when one relies on Allah, surrenders to Allah, accepts Allah's decrees and entrusts' .(his affairs to Allah.' (Tuhaf al-`Uqul, p. ۴٠٨

The Messenger of Allah ('a), too, attracted our attention to the conditions and attributes required for iman and what is lacking in one in order to reach the status of becoming a wali of Allah. Al-Kafi cites Imam al-Sadiq ('a) quoting his grandfather the Messenger of

,Allah (‘a) as saying

One who knows Allah and deems Him Great stops his tongue from speaking, his stomach’ ‘.from food and concerns himself with fasting and praying

,People said to him

O Messenger of Allah! May you be sacrificed with our parents, are such people’

p: ١١٥

(?‘!really the walis of Allah (‘a

,He (‘a) said

The walis of Allah remained silent, hence their silence was [an indication of] their’ remembrance of Allah. They cast a look, hence what they saw was a source of admonishment for them. They spoke, hence their speech was wisdom. And they walked, hence their walking among the people was a blessing (to those people). Had it not been for the life-terms pre-assigned for them, their souls would not have settled in their bodies out of their fear of the torment and out of eagerness for the rewards.’ (Al-Kafi, Vol. ۲, p. .(۱۸۶

So has our master Imam Ali son of Imam al-Husain (‘a) who attracted our attention to what belief and knowledge of the Almighty require, characteristics whereby a believer and his knowledge of the Almighty are gauged, saying, according to p. ۳۱۷ of al-Tibrisi’s :book Al-Ihtijaj (with a variation of wording), by way of poetic verses thus

Whoever knows Allah, but such knowledge

,Does not avail him, is surely a wretch

What would one do with the rich man’s prestige

?While all prestige belongs to the righteous man

What harm can touch a man of obedience

?So long as he obeys Allah

The basis of all good things, the axis upon which all matters revolve in as far as these requirements are concerned, is that one must continuously watch his conduct under all circumstances lest he should disobey Allah. He [Allah] must never be out of your sight, for you are never out of His(۱). And it is implied in

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۱ – What the author states here is the result of what is recorded in the books of ethical codes. It is the pith arrived at by those from among the walis of Allah Almighty who seek it. Such vigilance is the result of the primary struggle [against one's own whims and desires], and it by itself is a prerequisite for a much greater vigilance which absorbs all the affairs of the life of the worshipper who is not being watched. It is like one who sows a seed here and a seed there, in a fertile soil and in a salty one, without personally or through the help of someone else looking after it by irrigating and cultivating it. Had he surrounded such a seed with his care and attention, it would have shaken, set root and produced of every pleasing pair of vegetation.

:the following statement by the Prophet (‘s) to Abu Dharr

Worship Allah as though you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.’ (al-Tusi’s,’ .(Amali

,According to another hadith, the Prophet (‘s) said

If you see that He seeks you, yet you still disobey Him, you would then be holding Him’ ‘.with the least regards

So, if you keep being mindful of Allah, abandoning the entanglements which distract you from directing your full attention to Allah, you will surely then witness His kindness, how He looks after you, how He is kind to you, how He overlooks your faults, hides them from others, replaces your faults with merits, rewards your sins with many times their number in good deeds..., your love for Him will then be firmly established in your heart. Your senses will willingly obey Him just as anyone obeys those who are benevolent to him. The hearts are bent on loving those who are benevolent to them; so, what would you say ?!about this great Benevolent One, the most Affectionate, the most Merciful

It is because of the above reason that your soul shuns the doing of anything with which He is displeased. It feels too shy to reward benevolence with wrongdoing, or on account of feeling in awe of Him when His Greatness takes control of your heart, or out of fear of His signs being cut off from you. It is similar to what the poet implies when he says the :following

When enjoying a blessing, you should

p: ۱۱۷

,look after it

.For acts of disobedience remove the blessings

The same it is when He looks unto you; from your vision, everyone else besides Him diminishes; so you see none who helps or harms besides Allah, Glory and Exaltation to Him. Anyone else besides Him does whatever he does only with His permission. When hearts turn away from Allah Almighty, they cling to these causes because they forget Who causes them; otherwise, when they remember Allah and accept His guidance, they .will not consider turning to anyone else, or entirely cling to anyone besides Him

This, as far as the minds are concerned, is instinctive. When one is able to obtain help from the strongest source, how can he still cling to the weakest, nay, to what is nothing compared to Him, especially when, in the latter case, to one who will be deprived of the ,help of the Most Mighty of all?! A poet once said

One who seeks help from `Amr, in the time of need, stands

.Like one fleeing from fire by seeking refuge with burning sands

Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) ('a) was placed in the catapult and was hurled into the fire when Gabriel ('a) offered to help him saying, 'Brother Ibrahim! Do you need any help?.' 'Not from you,' answered Ibrahim. Hence, Allah Almighty caused the fire to be cool and :safe to him (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ١٢, p. ٣٣), revealing in his honor the following verse

.(and of Abraham who fulfilled his obligations.' (Qur'an, ٥٣:٣٧ ...'

This happened to prophet Abraham

p: ۱۱۸

because he turned only to Allah Almighty while being in such a condition. Because of His status, He suffices for all other causes. He dedicated his entire attention to the One Who causes every causation. The mark of his truthfulness is the honesty of his heart, its absence of confusion when all other means were there; actually, whether they were .there or not, it would not make any difference

I even heard one of those endowed with knowledge, may Allah elevate his status and raise his standards in both worlds, saying that perhaps he would be disturbed when causes are there, but when they are gone, his heart will be at ease, and he will no longer .be disturbed

These are the highest stations of reliance on Allah and the most truthful. It is as though the reason for the disturbance is the presence of causes: It is the direction of the Divine Command upon noticing the causes. When one notices them but not depends on them, it is quite understandable and normal; so, it is not out of the ordinary when one's heart is disturbed according to the extent of his assessment of them or of how much he thinks about them. Once they are removed, and the heart directs its attention to one single direction, it will be calm and serene at the mention of Allah; thus has Allah described in His :Glorious Book

Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah; without ...' ,doubt

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.(hearts do find rest in the remembrance of Allah.' (Qur'an, ١٣:٢٨

Also, a mark of his truthfulness is that his heart is not affected by one who does not respond favorably to Him when He calls upon him [to obey His Commandments]. Rather, one's condition should be the same like someone who once wrote a ruler requesting him .to give him of the sustenance with which Allah entrusted him

He did well when he wrote him as saying, 'Give me, for Allah is the One Who gives. He has enabled you to be a giver of goodness. But if you withhold it from me, Allah is the One Who withholds, and there is no harm on your part; do not forget your share of the life of '.this world and be good just as Allah has granted goodness to you

A person who looks to the One Who causes the causation, the One Who holds the means of all things, he does not feel angry in their regard. Yes, if one whom Allah enables to be a giver and who does not give, surely does not cease to be a tool in His hand. The true Giver of goodness has fixed with Him the right to reward you, obligating you to thank whoever gives you. Actually, He does not accept your thanking Him except if you thank the person .(whom He enabled to give you(١

This is a great principle overlooked by some of our pious brethren. They focused on Allah, so

p: ١٢٠

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١ - There is a reference here to the state of extravagance with which those who do not minutely know are afflicted. Examples of such extravagance are those who take to the path without being fully knowledgeable of its basics, without consulting those who are familiar with it, as they do something. Hence, not only did they fail to reach their destination, they wronged those who were truthful in seeking the path, accusing them of wearing an outfit which does not suit them! Observing the rights of people is inseparable from observing the rights of the Creator. He is the One Who ordered that we should .observe all rights, whether related to Him or to His servants from among His creation

they do not regard His creatures as having one single right obligating benevolence which Allah enables them to undertake. This is a very serious error and a great deal of confusion as well as ignorance of the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a). This way [and only this way] is compatible with reality. An example about the way of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) occurs in Al-Kafi ,where Imam Ali son of Imam al-Husain ('a) is quoted as having said

On the Day of Judgment, Allah will ask His servant, 'Did you thank so-and-so'. He will' answer Him by as saying, 'No, Lord, I thanked You instead.' Allah will then say, 'You did not thank Me since you did not thank him.' The Imam ('a) went on to say, 'The most .(appreciative among you is one who appreciates people the most.' (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٨١

.This text is quite clear as we have transmitted it

As for the conflict of this whimsical false charge with the reality, its basis springs out of the commoners as well as those who are stubborn and who say, 'We thank You, Lord, and we do not recognize any right for these intermediaries.' Allah rejects their argument and does not accept their thanks except if they thanked those whom He enabled to be good to them. Thus, He made the way to thank Him the recognition of those whom He enabled to be benevolent to others, making these benevolent folks the gate to Him; whoever does not approach Him through

p: ١٢١

.the gate will be dismissed and expelled

The same applies to spiritual knowledge and to means of expressing obedience to Allah. The commoners wanted to approach Allah without the intermediaries: Muhammad ('s) and his righteous and pure Ahl al-Bayt ('a)(۱). Allah rejected it, conditioning His acceptance on the recognition of His friends, on learning from them, referring to them, paying attention to them. Anything earned through any means other than through them is .rejected to its source and will be a problem to the latter

Denying the favor of benevolent individuals who, from among all people, hold the keys to giving, is a branch of this condemned false charge which has found its way to the hearts of some of our righteous fellows who did not pay attention to their source and to the truth. We have now removed the veil from them so that one may be guarded against .falling into its traps, and surely Allah is the One Who is the Protector

I would like in this chapter to quote a wonderful, curing and satisfying tradition on which I stumbled in Tuhaf al-`Uqul by the virtuous al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Shu`bah, one of our early fellows. Even our mentor al-Mufid (ra) quotes this same book, a book the like of which :time has not permitted to be written yet. Here it is

,A man once visited Imam al-Sadiq ('a). The Imam ('a) asked him

?'Who is the man from'

The man said, 'One of those who love and are loyal to you

This is a beautiful turn taken by the author regarding the necessity of observing the – ١ rights of all people and the obligation to thank the benevolent ones from among them, turning to address the necessity of observing the rights of all people especially the rights of those who represent the highest manifestations of adoration in existence. At the conclusion of his work, the compiler seals it with a musk seal, connecting the path to Allah Almighty to the detailed connection with those who lead to Him. Here, there is no end to one’s bewilderment with regard to those who sought to reach out to Allah Almighty without going through the gate which He ordered them to knock at. The Prophet (‘s) enjoined people to uphold them as next only to the Book of his Lord. One who abandons them actually abandons the means of salvation when one seeks refuge with both handles. If one contends himself with holding only to one of them, it will not be sufficient for his salvation. This is why anyone who abandons their way will never reach the degree of perfection even if he makes such a claim when he publicizes for it or expresses his passion in his poetry. Reaching to Allah Almighty is not attained by making claims or by .following whims

‘.[(Ahl al-Bayt (‘a]

,Al-Sadiq (‘a) said

Allah does not love a servant of His unless He takes him for a wali (friend), and once He’ takes him as His wali, He accepts nothing for him less than Paradise. From among whom ?‘of those who love us are you

The man kept silent. Sadeer asked the Imam (‘a), ‘How many [types] are those who love ,you [Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)], O son of the Messener of Allah (‘a)?’ The Imam (‘a) said

They are of three types: one which loves us openly but does not love us secretly; one’ which loves us secretly but does not love us openly, and one which loves us secretly and openly: These are the ones who are the highest of all. They drank of the purest of drinks, learned how to interpret the Book [of Allah] and the wisdom of speech as well as the causation of every cause; they are the highest rank. Poverty and want as well as various types of afflictions are more swift in reaching them than racing steeds. Trials and tribulations affected them, and they were shaken tremendously; so, some of them were wounded while others were slaughtered. They are dispersed in every distant land. .Through them does Allah cure the sick and enrich the destitute

Through them are you to receive victory. Through them do you receive the rain and the sustenance, and they are the least in number and the greatest in esteem and significance ,with Allah. As for the second class

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the lesser one, it includes those who love us publicly and yet do what kings do. Their tongues are with us while their swords are drawn against us. As for the third class, the middle one, it includes those who loved us secretly but did not love us openly. By my life! !How I wish they truly loved us secretly rather than openly

Such are those who fast during the day and spend the night in prayers. You can see the mark of asceticism on their faces; they are the people who willingly surrender to their '.Lord and uphold His Commandments

The man said, 'I am one of those who love you secretly and openly.' Imam al-Sadiq ('a) ,said

'.Those who love us secretly and openly have marks whereby they are identified'

,The man said, 'What are these marks?' The Imam ('a) said

These are characteristics the first of which is that they know Tawhid as it should be' known; they perfect the science of Unifying Him; they then believe in how He is and what His attribute is. Then they come to know the definitions of iman, the facts about it, its '.conditions and interpretations

Sadeer said, 'O son of the Messenger of Allah! I never heard you before describing iman ,like that!' The Imam ('a) said

Yes, O Sadeer! An inquirer ought not ask about iman before first knowing in whom he has' '.to believe

Sadeer said, 'O Son of the Messenger of Allah! Could you please explain what you have

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,just said?' Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said

Anyone who claims he knows Allah by what his heart tells him is mushrik. Anyone who' claims he knows Allah by name without knowing exactly what the name means admits that he has cast doubt about Him because a name is created. One who claims he worships the name and the meaning attributes a partner to Allah. One who claims that he worships the attribute not with his true realization refers to someone who is not there. One who claims that he worships the attribute and the One to Whom it is attributed violates the principle of Tawhid because the attribute is something while the One to Whom it is attributed is someone else. One who claims he adds the One described to His '.(description minimizes a Grand One: 'They underestimate Allah...' (Qur'an, ۶:۹۱

,It was said to him, 'Then what is the path to Tawhid?' He ('a) said

The means of the research are available. Seeking the outcome exists. One can know' what he sees prior to someone else describing it for him. One can get to know the '.description of someone absent before seeing him in person

It was said to him, 'How can we get to know what we witness prior to being informed of ,one's attribute?' He ('a) said

You get to know Him; you get to know about His knowledge and identify yourself through' Him. You cannot identify yourself by yourself on your own. You will know that what is in Him is

His and is through Him just as they said to Yousuf: 'Are you indeed Yousuf?' He said, 'I am Yousuf, and this is my brother.' (Qur'an, ۱۲:۹۰). So they identified him [Yousuf] by his own person, not by [comparing him with] some other person, nor did they become convinced that it was he simply because their hearts suggested so to them. Have you not noticed how Allah says, 'It is not in your power to cause the growth of its trees.' (Qur'an, ۲۷:۶۰)? He means: You do not have the option to install an Imam by your own selves then call him '.righteous through your own whims and self-wills

,Then Imam al-Sadiq ('a) added saying

Three persons to whom Allah shall not speak on the Day of Judgment, nor will He look' upon them, nor will He purify them, and they shall receive a painful torment: One who plants a tree which was not planted by Allah (i.e. one who installs an Imam who was not appointed by Allah), one who denies the authority of someone appointed by Allah, and one who claims that both these persons have a share in Islam although Allah has already said, 'Your Lord creates and chooses as He pleases: They have no choice (in the matter).' .((Qur'an, ۲۸:۶۸

,As for the description of iman, the Imam ('a) said

The meaning of the attribute iman is: admission of and submission to Allah through the' humility of thus admitting, seeking nearness to Him through His help, carrying out the

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responsibility towards Him with regard to anything small or big, starting from Tawhid and ending with anything less, up to the last venue of obedience to Him, one after the other. ‘.All this is inter-connected one to another, each linked to the other

So, if a servant of Allah performs what Allah has obligated him to perform, the knowledge of which having reached him as we have described above, then he is a believer (mu’min) worthy of the attribute of iman, deserving to be rewarded. The meaning of iman as a whole implies admission of acceptance to be wholly obedient of every commandment, small or big, each linked to the other; thus, a believer does not get out of the cycle of iman .except when he abandons the doing of that in which he himself believed

He earned and became worthy of being called a mu’min after having carried out his major obligations, each linked to the other, avoiding and abandoning the committing of major sins. If he abandons minor acts of obedience, committing minor acts of disobedience, he does not get out of the cycle of iman, nor is he regarded as having abandoned it unless he abandons the performing of major acts of obedience and does not commit any major act of disobedience. As long as he has not done so, he is a believer :on account of this verse

If you (only) avoid the most heinous of the things which you are forbidden, We will drive’ out all the

,(evil in you and admit you into a gate of great honor.’ (Qur’an, ۴:۳۱

referring to His forgiveness of what is less than a major sin. If one commits a major sin, he will be held accountable for having committed all other sins, small and big, and he will .be tormented because of them, as we are told on p. ۳۲۵ of Tuhaf al-` Uqul

This concludes what we liked to cite. The text continues; those who wish to refer to it may do so. It includes categorizing love for Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), an attribute which is the mark of .iman and from which iman diversifies. This, indeed, is a tradition like no other

Such knowledge is not incorporated in one single tradition, although traditions put .together will convey the gist of this sacred tradition

Such are the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a): each one of them explains the other. None of them contradicts the other. One may see ‘differences’ in them when he is ignorant of the areas which preceded their explanations. Each one of them aspires to explain one of such areas. It is used to point to another by way of reference and allusion so that each person :will attain his share thereof

Each group [of people] now know their own watering place. So eat and drink of the’ .(sustenance provided by Allah and do no evil nor mischief on earth.’ (Qur’an, ۲:۶۰

Chapter ۱۱: Degrees of Believers. Believers are of Various Degrees Distinguishing One from the Other With Regard to Their Limits

This chapter deals with the many different degrees of iman and each mu'min's share thereof. Al-Miqdad, may Allah be

p: ۱۲۸

pleased with him, occupies the eighth degree, while Abu Dharr [al-Ghifari], may Allah be pleased with him, occupies the ninth. Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, occupies the tenth, and so on.

In Al-Kafi, `Abdul-Aziz al-Qaratasi is cited as having said,

Abu Abdullah ('a) said to me, 'O `Abdul-Aziz! Iman falls into ten degrees: it is like a ladder,' one step is ascended after the other. Nobody, therefore, who occupies the second should say to the one who occupies the first: 'You do not have anything!= till he ascends to the tenth. So, do not look down upon one who is below you or else he who is above you may cause you to slip and fall. When you see someone occupying a degree less than yours, raise him kindly to you, and do not over-burden him so you may cause him to break, for anyone who causes a believer to break has to rejoin what he breaks. (Al-Kafi, Vol. ٢, p. ٣٧).

Surely Allah blesses Muhammad ('s) and the Progeny of Muhammad ('s), the righteous ones, the purified.

Destiny has hindered the completion of this work; so, I plead to Allah, the King, the all-Knowing, to grant us those who will complete this speech; surely none loses hope of His mercy except those who are mean.

p: ١٢٩

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities in .religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes .of people interested in reading, with various formats in the cyberspace

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paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

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mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

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Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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